

John

Bible Commentary 2021

by

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Jesus is God – John Chapter 1

1:1-5

It would be a good idea to compare these opening verses with the first chapter of Genesis. Also, compare this with the first chapter of First John as well.

It is clear from these bible verses that Jesus Christ is God. To deny the deity of Jesus Christ is to deny the Holy Bible, the gospel, and the only way a man can be saved. Jesus Christ is God. The clear witness and testimony from the Holy Bible is that Jesus Christ is God.

He is also a man. He came into this world as a light to men but men did not comprehend the Lord. Even his own disciples had a difficult time understanding what he said, why he did what he did, or his purpose in being here in the first place.

The Lord Jesus is referred to as the Word. The Word of God is a person. It is not an abstract idea. The word is not just a positive confession. The word is a person. Never forget that God's Word is a person. A person has context. A person has a mind, and feelings, and a goal. You cannot make the Word of God conform to your own ideas or desires. You must conform yourself to the Word of God. The Word of God will not conform himself to you.

What do we have as a description here of the Word of God? He existed before time, before the beginning. In the beginning he already existed. He existed with God. And he was God. This is a clear proclamation of the trinity of God. God is Father, and God is Son, and God is Holy Spirit. In the first few verses of John's gospel we already have a clear presentation that God is more than one divine Person. This is the true God. To deny that God is a trinity is to deny the Holy Bible, the gospel, and the only way a man can be saved. If Jesus is God, and the Father is God, then already we have a problem if God is not more than one Person.

How do people get around this? Men try to pull God into time and space and say God evolved from being the Father, into the Son, and now is the Holy Spirit. But this is blasphemy. God does not change. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. God does not evolve. God is not a man. He does not change. This idea of modalism is an offshoot from the theory of evolution. People who deny the facts in the Bible usually always resort to some form of evolution in their ideas. This goes back to the lie of

the devil in the garden when he told Eve she would evolve and become a god. To imply God is evolving from Father, to Son, and now is the Holy Spirit is to bring God down to the level of man.

God has always been Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God will always be Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Go back and read the first few verses of this gospel of John again. Do we believe what the plain text says or not? If you do, then you must believe in the trinity. You must believe that Jesus Christ is God, and that he always lived with God the Father in eternity past, present, and future.

The Lord Jesus was also involved in creation. This entire material universe was created by the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Lord Jesus Christ is eternal life. If you do not have the Son of God you do not have life. The Lord Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. There is no other God but him. He is the true God and eternal life.

Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He rose again on the third day. 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

1:6-13

The person named John that is mentioned here in these verses is John the Baptist, and not the man named John who was actually writing this gospel account. John the Baptist was a prophet who preached in the wilderness a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. People went out to John to hear him preach and he made the road straight for the appearance of the Messiah. John the Baptist was a witness to the light of God who is Jesus Christ. Notice that the apostle John here described the Lord Jesus as the Word of God. Now he also called the Lord Jesus the "Light". John the Baptist pointed to Christ and was a witness so that people would believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord came into the world, and even though the world was made by the Lord Jesus, the world did not recognize him. They did not know him. The Lord Jesus came to his own people, the nation of Israel, but for the most part none of them recognized him or acknowledged him.

Then in verse 12 we have a powerful promise. This is a verse that is worth memorizing and hiding in your heart. Verse 12, *"But as many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."*

This shows us how simple the gospel message is. Everyone who believes, receives, and calls upon the name of the Lord Jesus is saved. He gives those who receive him and believe on his name the right and power to become the sons of God. We become sons of God through simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Call upon the name of Jesus.

There is power in the name of Jesus. There is power to leave behind your old life of sin. You can be set free from sin, self, the world, and the devil. No matter what your past is you can have a new life today. Your sins can be washed away, and your past can be put under the blood of Jesus Christ. Call upon the name of Jesus today.

The Lord is good. Taste and see that the Lord is good. Let go of your old life and allow the Lord to make you into a new creation in Christ Jesus. Old things are passed. Behold, all things become new.

1:14-18

God The Word became a man. He was born of a virgin mother, Mary. God entered the world as man. He who made all things came into the world he made but the world he made did not recognize him or accept him. God in the flesh lived among us. He walked on the surface of this planet as a man. He made his home in a tiny country in the Middle East called Israel. He grew up in a village called Nazareth. He had a real family, a real work place, a real church he attended. He walked among us. He loved people and they loved him.

The apostle John describes him as being "full of grace and truth". Think about that for a minute. He was a man who could completely speak the truth in perfect love. He could rebuke you and you would be convinced that you were the most special loved person on the planet. Correction with complete love. Grace and truth. Love and discipline. These are the qualities which make the best parents, the best employers, the best Pastors, the best leaders. If you find a leader who can love people and correct them at the same time then you found a rare thing in today's world.

John the Baptist witnessed to others about the Lord Jesus. He said that the Lord Jesus came after him but was before him. What does this mean? It means that John the Baptist recognized that Jesus Christ was God who walked as a man. He existed in eternity past, but appeared in time after John the Baptist. He always was, always will be. He is the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end. How did John the Baptist know this? He knew it by revelation from the heavenly Father. God revealed to John the Baptist who the Lord Jesus was and is. Even before John the Baptist was born he knew who the Lord Jesus was.

Notice a contrast is made between the law of Moses and then grace and truth in Jesus Christ. The law came by Moses. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. This is showing us that in the day of church we live a different fashion than Israel did in the Old Testament. We do not live under the law of Moses which was given to the nation of Israel. We live under the grace and truth which is in Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul further expounds on this doctrine in his letters, showing us the difference between serving God under the law and serving God under grace. The book of Romans goes in-depth on this subject.

No one can know who God is except through the revelation of Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus revealed God the Father to us in completeness. The Lord Jesus is the express image of God in a man. He is the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

Colossians 2:9, "*For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*"

Christ died for our sins. He was buried, and he rose again on the third day. Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

1:19-28

Here we have the testimony of John the Baptist to the religious leaders. Actually, the religious leaders did not even come out to see John the Baptist but instead sent messengers to ask John the Baptist who he thought he was. Isn't that just like proud men with a lot of prestige and position? They would not go out themselves but they would send spies to get information. They wouldn't go out to the river! They might get wet!

John the Baptist told them plainly who he was. He was not the Christ, or the Prophet, or Elijah. Instead, he was a voice crying in the wilderness who warned people to get ready for the Messiah. John told them plainly there was a man who stood among them who John believed that he was not worthy to untie his shoes. John told them the Messiah was already there, but they did not know who he talked about. They would never accept the testimony of John the Baptist or the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. They had their own agenda. To these religious leaders John the Baptist was probably just a trouble maker. He was someone stirring up the crowds. But John the Baptist was the fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah. He came as a voice in the wilderness to make a straight path for the Lord to walk on.

The world, especially the religious world, will challenge you on anything you try to do for God. If God calls you to do something then expect that worldly religious people, especially those in position with prestige, will come down on you. They will not go along with a messenger sent by God. They will oppose it. However, worldly religious people cannot stop a true move of God in their midst. They could not stop John the Baptist. They could not stop Jesus. They could not stop the apostles in the book of Acts. They cannot stop the Lord Jesus from returning again and establishing his kingdom upon this earth.

The Lord will return again. He returns to set up his kingdom on this earth. Every knee shall bow. Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

1:29-39

John the Baptist testified that when the Lord Jesus was baptized in water that the Holy Spirit came upon him as a dove from heaven. John said that the one who called him into ministry told him that the one upon whom the Holy Spirit would descend and abide was the Messiah. John said that he saw this happen to the Lord Jesus Christ and he proclaimed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. Once John knew who Jesus was he began to point people to the Lord Jesus. He said, "Behold the Lamb of God", and pointed his disciples to Jesus. At this point his disciples left him and began to follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

Two of John's disciples followed Jesus and asked him where stayed. The Lord invited them to come and see where he lived. This was the beginning of the twelve apostles of the Lord Jesus.

We have the witness and testimony of John the Baptist, and the witness of the Holy Spirit. This same account is mentioned in other gospels as well and includes the testimony of God the Father from heaven proclaiming that Jesus is his Son.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is God the Son, and he is the Son of God. Jesus is fully God, and he is fully man. He is the God Man.

1:40-51

The Lord Jesus called men to follow him. We see mentioned here Andrew, Simon who was renamed Cephas (Peter), Philip, and Nathanael. Two interesting conversations took place here. One conversation was with Simon who he renamed Cephas. Cephas means Peter, which means rock.

Another conversation was with Nathanael. When Philip brought Nathanael to Jesus, the Lord Jesus proclaimed, "...an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile..." Nathanael asked Jesus how he knew him, and Jesus said he saw him sitting under the fig tree before Philip called him. What does this mean?

It means that God has foreknowledge of our lives. He sees us, and he knows those who will come to him and be his disciple. The Lord knew me long before I ever knew him. He saw me when I was a small child, when I was a young man, when I grew up. He saw me and designed every step of my life. Before a word is on my tongue, lo, he knows it altogether. The Lord has hemmed me in behind and before, and has laid his hand upon me.

The part where Jesus mentioned angels ascending and descending hearkened back to the account of Jacob when he had a vision of angels ascending and descending. Jesus said Nathanael was a true man of "Israel" in whom there was no guile. Before Jacob became Israel he was a man of guile, but after his confrontation with the Lord and wrestling with the angel he became Israel. The Lord removed all the guile out of his heart.

The Lord removes all the vain imaginations, the guile, and the deceit from our lives. The longer you walk with the Lord the more you will become simple, and straight forward, and sincere, and honest. In other words, the Lord will make you child-like in your attitude. The Lord makes us humble and sincere, like himself.

Notice that Nathanael immediately recognized who Jesus really was. How did he do this? He did this because he had an honest and a good heart. If we will approach the Holy Bible with honesty and humility then we also will come away exclaiming, "The Lord, he is God! He is the king of Israel!" He is also the king of my heart. Amen.

He Turned The Water Into Wine – John Chapter 2

2:1-11

The people who knew what the Lord Jesus did were his mother, his disciples, and the servants. This beginning of miracles the Lord Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and his disciples believed in him. This miracle of turning water into wine showed the Lord's glory. It demonstrated his power as the creator. The Lord is the creator of the universe. Nothing is too difficult for the Lord.

The purpose of the miracle was not only to provide wine for the governor of the feast. It also demonstrated to the Lord's disciples who he truly was. The Lord revealed himself to his disciples and the servants through this miracle. Only a few people noticed the miracle which took place in front of everyone at the feast. The people who knew were humble people, or people who already followed the Lord Jesus.

This showed something about the nature of God and the nature of man. I often wonder why it was lowly shepherds who received such a revelation of the birth of Christ. Why did Paul say in his letter that God chose people who were humble or base?

This revealed something about the nature of God. He hid himself from the proud and arrogant but he revealed himself to those who were of a contrite and lowly heart.

Isaiah 57:15, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

God gives grace to the humble, but he opposes those who are proud. Who are the proud? The proud are those who are strong in the world system, those who rise in power, prestige, and position in the world system. You cannot attain position in the world without cultivating the pride of life.

The only example I can find in the Bible which contradicts this general rule is Daniel. God elevated Daniel to a high position in government. However, Daniel was the exception and not the rule. Also, Daniel never lost his ability to bow his knees and pray three times a day in humility to God. He was definitely one of a kind in the human race.

The Lord Jesus turned the water into wine. Did this teach us that it is OK to drink alcohol? There are a lot of scriptures in the bible which people can use to justify drinking alcohol. I think if someone did use scripture like this to justify drinking alcohol they would be in spiritual trouble. They were only hurting themselves and are also a stumbling block to other people.

2:12-25

The Lord Jesus went to Jerusalem with his disciples and family. He cleansed the temple of moneychangers and proclaimed "*Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.*" This was an exhortation we should remember. Don't mix business with religion. This is something we can easily fall into. How many churches have become mini-corporations? It is sad to see the church which becomes a religious business.

The Lord Jesus was confronted for his actions at the temple. His reply to them was a challenge for them to tear down the temple and he would raise it in three days. This was a prophecy that the religious leaders would hand the Lord Jesus over to be crucified, but after three days he would rise from the dead. It was only after Jesus was resurrected that the disciples understood what Jesus said.

Many people believed in the Lord Jesus when they saw the miracles he did, but the scripture says the Lord Jesus did not commit himself to any of them. He knew all men and did not need for anyone to

testify for him. He knew how unreliable men could be. This can be seen later in the contrast between his triumphal entry and the quick turn around the crowd made when they asked Pilate for Jesus to be crucified.

Several lessons can be taken from this. Be careful about your involvement with the church. Make sure your motives are not for self or business interests. If you go to church to make business contacts or build your business then you should consider the anger which the Lord Jesus showed toward people who brought business into his house.

Another idea to remember is that we cannot put our trust in men. The Lord Jesus did not put his trust in men. He put his trust in his heavenly father. As the Psalmist wrote we should not put our trust in princes. The best of men are at their best only men.

Put your trust in the Lord today. He is your provider, your protector, and your portion forever.

You Must Be Born Again – John Chapter 3

3:1-8

This was a conversation between the Lord Jesus and a Pharisee. The Pharisee Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews but somehow his heart was open to believe in the Lord Jesus. He came to the Lord at night probably out of fear of man. He began by calling the Lord Jesus "Rabbi" and said that he believed he was from God because of the miracles he did.

The Lord did not reply to what Nicodemus said but instead spoke directly to the need in the heart of this religious leader. He told him that he must be born again.

I believe the phrase "born again" was the correct translation because I believe the mention of water in these verses points to natural birth. A man was born once by a woman. He was born again by the Holy Spirit. One was a natural birth, one was a supernatural birth. The reason I believe "born again" was correct was because that was the way in which Nicodemus understood Jesus. He asked if a man could return to his mother's womb to be born again?

The Lord Jesus compared the Holy Spirit to natural wind. We cannot control the wind. Neither can man control the Holy Spirit. Those who were born again were no longer ruled by natural religion anymore. Instead, they were controlled and led by the Holy Spirit.

Walking in the Spirit is completely different than following natural religion. It is very difficult for religious people to understand and experience the life of the Spirit. It is not impossible. I believe Nicodemus eventually understood the Lord and probably was born again at some point. The words which the Lord planted in his heart during this meeting no doubt took root and brought forth spiritual fruit in this man's life.

You must be born again. This is the gospel proclamation. We cannot get more clear than what the Lord Jesus said to Nicodemus. Unless you are born again you will never see the kingdom of God. Do you want to go to heaven when you die? Do you want to see God's kingdom? You must be born again.

How am I born again? Humble yourself, repent, and believe the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day. He bore our sins upon himself at Calvary. He took our place. God forgives our sins for the sake of his son Jesus Christ. Call upon the name of the Lord Jesus and be born again by the Holy Spirit today.

3:9-15

The Lord Jesus used the example of Moses who lifted up a snake in the wilderness to illustrate for Nicodemus what would happen to himself. In the same manner that when people looked up at the snake in the wilderness it saved them from death, so also when people look to the Lord Jesus upon Calvary their souls are saved. We are saved from eternal death by putting our faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day, according to the scriptures.

The Lord exhorted Nicodemus and appealed to the fact that he should know better. Nicodemus had a position as being a master of Israel. This meant he was in a position to teach spiritual truth to others, and yet he did not understand basic truth of how a man can be saved from eternal death!

It is scary to think how many religious leaders there are in the Christian church who can teach on prosperity and how to live a good life but do not even understand the basic doctrine of how a man is born again. Unless a man is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Jesus said that he spoke with Nicodemus about earthly things and he did not believe. How then could he speak about heavenly things? We must be able to grasp the fundamentals of salvation before we can move on to other doctrines. We must understand that everything begins when a man is born again by the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit there is no hope of truly understanding the word of God or imparting spiritual life to other people. We must first have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus before we can teach others about God. We must live truth before we can impart truth to others. Otherwise, we are spreading the letter of the law which will put burdens on people.

Have you ever heard someone preach from the Bible and walked away feeling more heavy, more depressed, more discouraged? It is a good chance the man did not walk in the truth he tried to preach. In order to give something to another we must first have it ourselves. To give spiritual life to people we must be filled with the Holy Spirit. We must be born again.

3:16-21

Here is a famous verse in the Bible. People who know nothing about the Bible have probably heard this verse. John 3:16. It is an important verse in the Bible. It contains a concise summary of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. God loves us so much he gave his only begotten Son! Why? So that whoever would believe in him should not perish but have everlasting life. Perish? Yes, perish. As in hellfire and eternal separation from God. God loves us so much that he does not want to see one person die and go to hell. It is not God's will for anyone to perish but for every single person to repent, believe the gospel, and be saved. The Lord Jesus loves us so much he died on the cross in our place. I wonder if we really meditate on this enough. Do we let this sink in? Do we grab hold of the depth of God's love

demonstrated for us upon the cross of Calvary? I doubt we can understand how much God loves us. But we can understand John 3:16 and we can choose today to believe in Jesus. This is so simple even a child can understand this and believe and be saved. It is not complicated.

Those who reject God's message of love by complaining that they do not understand the Bible are lying. It is not hard to understand John 3:16. If you will take this one verse, and believe in it, and accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, then you can understand the other truths in God's word. But it begins here. Accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

Those who reject this free offer of salvation do so because they love their sin. They will not come into the light of God's word because they love the darkness. They think the darkness covers their sins. But the darkness does not hide from God. The Lord can see you even in the darkest night. He knows where you live. One day you will give an account to him for your life. Even the words you have spoken will be brought into account.

Humble yourself. Turn to Jesus. Receive God's love and forgiveness as outlined in the gospel. Read John 3:16, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, and Romans 10:9-14. The Lord can save you today if you are willing.

3:22-30

Here we see people tried to cause division between John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ. This was the work of the devil. The devil always tries to sow division by comparing one man to another man. When you see people do this remember the message of the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:10-17. For some reason the enemy likes to make the issue of baptism a dividing doctrine. But what was the response of John the Baptist when people tried to make a comparison between him and Jesus? John said, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

The response from a Spirit filled man is always to humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. We should always humble ourselves when the enemy tries to create division. Never defend yourself. Humble yourself. Trust in God. Philippians 2:3, "*Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*" Romans 12:3, "*For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*"

By humbling ourselves we defeat the lies of the devil. When the enemy tries to bring strife then the solution is humility. Humble yourselves. Do not allow the enemy to set one man against another.

The Lord is near. Walk in the fear of the Lord. Do not compare yourselves with other people and do not compete against others. Take the humble place and live for the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord is your rewarder.

3:31-36

These verses continue the testimony of John the Baptist about the Lord Jesus Christ. John said that Jesus came from above and was above all.

John recognized that men are of the earth. We speak from the viewpoint of the earth. However, the Lord Jesus Christ came from heaven and was above all of them.

What the Lord Jesus saw and heard he preached. Men did not accept the testimony of the Lord because they were from the earth and the Lord was from heaven. Men were self worshipers and only thought of self. They could not think in terms of God's kingdom. Men rejected the testimony of Jesus because they were sinners and lived in darkness.

God sent Jesus Christ, and the Lord Jesus spoke the word of God. Anyone who believes upon the Lord Jesus Christ has agreed with God. When we believe God's word we affirm the truth. If we do not believe in God's word we call God a liar.

Anyone who believes in God's Son Jesus Christ has eternal life. Anyone who does not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ does not have life but God's wrath abides on him. The wrath of God abides on anyone who does not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Other scriptures which build on this truth: Ephesians 2:1-3, "*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*" 1 John 5:10-12, "*He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*"

Living Water – John Chapter 4

4:1-4

The Lord Jesus did not baptize people. Paul said the Lord did not send him to baptize people but rather preach the gospel. There was definitely something about baptism that seemed to indicate when you allowed a man to baptize you then you had joined his club or submitted to the name of a man. It seemed to breed strife, or envy, or vain glory under certain circumstances. I'm not against water baptism by any means. However, there does seem to be a danger in this religious ordinance. It was a danger that men thought they brought other men underneath their own name or control.

When the Lord became aware that the Pharisees noticed that the Lord's disciples baptized more than John then the Lord Jesus left the area. He wanted no part in men who sowed seeds of competition, strife, comparison, or vain glory. We should be very sensitive to this. Don't allow yourself to be put in a situation where you are set in contrast or competition with another brother, another church, another ministry. Always take the road of humility and walk away from competition, contrasting, or comparing. Don't let people compare you to someone else. Don't compare yourself with others. This is the road to self-worship, and it is the basis of the world system.

Instead of building numbers the Lord left everything and headed to Samaria where he had an appointment with one person. The Lord left the 99 and went to find the one lost sheep that he needed to save.

May God give us this same attitude to leave vain glory and have the heart of a true shepherd who seeks those who are lost.

4:5-9

The Lord Jesus went out of his way to visit the city of Samaria, which was an unusual place for a Jewish rabbi to visit. The woman he encountered at Jacob's well thought it was strange. However, the Lord Jesus knew exactly what he was doing and why he was here. This woman needed the living water of eternal life and the Lord met her to offer her this living water.

He began the conversation by asking her for a drink of water. Her first response was a rebuke toward him. She asked him why he asked for her help. He was a Jew and she was a Samaritan, and the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans.

This conversation revealed deep divisions have always existed in history. Men always suffered from division among different classes of people, whether those barriers were ethnic, religious, racial, or language. Men always naturally suspected others who were not like themselves.

However, the Lord Jesus crossed all these barriers. I'd like to suggest that any crossing over bridges between men is on account of this one man from Galilee. He is the great bridge over which men cross and meet one another. I know there are Arabs and Jews who love one another because they both love the Lord Jesus Christ. There are people of every nation and language who love one another because they love the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord unites all mankind. It is only in Christ Jesus that all divisions and barriers are removed. It is only in the Lord that men find common ground for agreement.

These verses were the beginning of this conversation, but I want to take a little bit of time just to comment on this picture of the Lord reaching across barriers. He was the great shepherd who went looking for the lost sheep. He came to seek and to save the lost.

Colossians 3:10-11, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all."

4:10-14

The Lord Jesus made this offer to every person who would take the time to listen to him. Anyone who would listen to the Lord Jesus can receive this exact same offer of living water. This living water represents the Holy Spirit and eternal life. If the Holy Spirit comes and lives in your heart then you are made alive, born again, and have life that lasts forever.

This woman interpreted what the Lord Jesus said in natural terms. However, the Lord Jesus was speaking spiritual truth. How can the Lord speak to us about eternity in a way in which we can

comprehend? He used word pictures like "water", and "light", and "fruit". These were simple words that even a child could grasp. But what the Lord talked about went beyond the natural world that we can see, and hear, and feel, and touch. It is an eternal world which is beyond human comprehension. God offered us a chance to be with him in eternity. He loved us so much that he was willing to humble himself and become a man. He was a man who sat down next to this well and spoke to this woman. He did this, not only for her sake, but for everyone in her village, and also everyone who would read the testimony of this conversation.

If we drink of this world we will always be thirsty. If all we ever drink is the water that is of this world system then we will always be thirsty. This world system we live in cannot satisfy the spiritual thirst that is in our heart. Only the Lord Jesus Christ can truly satisfy our spiritual thirst. Every person born into this world thirsts after this living water, but it is only when we believe in the Lord Jesus that we can experience the living water which satisfies.

The Lord Jesus is living water. He offers himself to satisfy our spiritual thirst. If any man will drink this living water he will never thirst again. He will no longer need the empty waters of this world.

4:15-18

These scriptures demonstrate that the Lord Jesus knew everything about her life. He had complete knowledge of this woman's life. He knew this woman would be here. The scripture said that he had to go to this meeting. This was a divine appointment that the Lord knew about before he got there. He knew this woman's history and her life.

He knows the same thing about each one of us. He knows the life we have lived. This woman had lived a life of sin, and yet the Lord is reaching out to her in mercy and grace.

This shows us the heart of God. The Lord came to seek and to save those who were lost. The Lord went looking for lost sinners. Paul the apostle said that he was the chief of sinners, but God saved him in order to demonstrate the greatness of his mercy and grace toward sinners.

I was street witnessing one time and met a young man who had been in a war. He had killed people during that war, and as we talked he said he did not believe God could forgive him for killing another human being. However, I showed him the life of Paul in the Bible. I helped him to understand that God can forgive. There are men in the bible who killed people, and yet God forgave them and even used them in the ministry. Moses is one example. David is another. And the apostle Paul is another example.

It does not matter what we have done in our past. The Lord knows all about it. If the Lord is speaking to you today it is because he loves you and he wants to wash away all of your past sins. He talked to this woman, in spite of her history and past, because he wanted to bring her to the saving knowledge of the Messiah. He revealed himself to this woman as the Messiah. He brought her to the saving knowledge of himself.

The Lord sends us out to share with others the good news. The Lord Jesus is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God by him. He lives forever interceding for us. He has made a way for

us to be reconciled back to God. You may have peace with God today through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

4:19-24

After the Lord confronted this woman over her sinful lifestyle she changed the subject to religion. She acknowledged that he was a prophet. How else could he know all about her life? She started with what she understood of religion, which was a limited theology of mixed up ideas. The Lord began to correct her on what she said.

First of all, he removed the worship of God from any specific geographical location. In the Old Testament, under the law of Moses, the worship of God was always in a very specific location. It was at the tabernacle, and later it was at the temple where the ark of the covenant was located. Worship was always tied down to the temple and Jerusalem.

However, we see that the Lord introduced a completely different way of relating to God and worshiping God. We know from the letters of Paul that the temple of God is no longer a building made with hands, but each individual believer is the true temple of God. Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that the Father looks for those who will worship in spirit and in truth. God is a Spirit and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

We could expound more on this phrase "spirit and truth", but let us summarize by saying that we worship God through the Holy Spirit and through the Word of God. The truth is in God's Word. The Holy Spirit fills the heart of every believer. If we have one and not the other then we will get out of balance. We must have the Holy Spirit. We must have the Word of God. We need the Spirit and we need the Truth to worship God correctly. This is one of the fundamental ways the enemy tries to mess up churches. He will get them to emphasize one or the other and not both at the same time. Jesus said we must worship in spirit and in truth.

God is not tied down to one geographical location. We should not try to put God in a box and think we can only worship God in a church building on Sunday morning. We can worship God any time and any where. I believe the Lord wants us to worship him every day of the week and in everything we do, and every where we go. Never leave the Lord behind, but take him with you everywhere you go.

Another important point to remember from this passage is this: salvation is of the Jews. God gave us the scriptures through Israel and the Jewish people. The Lord Jesus Christ himself in his humanity is a Jewish man.

Do not ever allow the enemy to put hatred in your heart toward the Jew. Don't ever believe that God is finished with Israel and the Jew. God still has a plan for Israel. God loves the Jewish people. They are his chosen people, even today, even if they are still in unbelief, God still loves them.

Do not let your heart develop an apathy or indifference toward Israel or the Jewish people. We are to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, and the salvation of Israel.

Don't allow the attitude of the world to get into your theology or thinking and become indifferent, apathetic, or worst case, anti-Semitic. Don't let that into your mind or your heart. Anti-Semitic attitudes are from the devil.

May the Lord help us to always bless Israel, to support the Jewish people, and pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

4:25-26

This is one of the few places where the Lord Jesus specifically revealed himself as the Messiah to a person. This woman knew he was a prophet, but she did not realize he was the Messiah. She knew the hope for which Israel and the Samaritans waited. They waited for the Messiah. Their idea of the Messiah was probably of a military leader who would deliver them from the Romans. Eventually the Lord will return as a conquering king. But at that time in history he came as a humble man to be the Savior of the world. She said she knew the Messiah would come into the world. Jesus told her that he was himself the Messiah she looked for.

I can't imagine the spiritual shock this woman must have experienced. It is evident she believed what he said to her because of her reaction. What joy she must have felt! What wonder and amazement must have arisen in her heart! Somehow, this woman who had no husband found the one man that everyone in the nation waited for. Here was the Messiah. Why did he come to her of all people? Why did he reveal himself to this humble woman who came to get water at this well?

Why was he born in a stable and laid in a manger? Why did the angels only appear to the lowly shepherds keeping watch over their flock by night? Why did he grow up in a village that had no reputation? What does this tell us about the nature and character of God?

The apostle Paul touched upon this in 1 Corinthians 1:27-29, "*But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.*"

The Lord chose lowly fisherman and a tax collector to be his twelve apostles. He chose to witness to a humble woman at a well. The Lord came into the world to seek and to save those who are lost.

Do you feel lost today? Do you feel your need for salvation? Do you know that you need God's help today?

The Lord Jesus invites us to come to him and find rest. He is our provider, he is our protector, and he is our portion forever.

As David said in Psalm 23:1, "*the Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want*".

Call upon the name of the Lord. Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

4:27-38

When the Lord's disciples returned the Samaritan woman forgot her water pot and went back into the village to bring everyone out to meet the Lord Jesus. This was an automatic response to meeting the Lord Jesus. Men try to make evangelism a program in the church. However, when we truly encounter the Lord Jesus Christ we become instant evangelists. I've experienced this in my life. When I truly encountered the Lord Jesus Christ I had no problem telling people. My problem was knowing when to keep my mouth shut at times. Evangelism is the natural outpouring of a heart that is filled with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The disciples were confused when they saw Jesus talking to this woman. They did not understand why he would cross over these barriers to talk to this woman, but they had enough sense not to reproach the Lord or try to correct him. He knew they were confused, and he taught them about the harvest that was before them. Here we see the beginnings of the Lord Jesus teaching his apostles that this harvest does not only include Jews but also Gentiles. The Lord purposely reached out to people outside of the nation of Israel. Several times he pointed out to his disciples the great faith that people had who were not Jewish or in the nation of Israel. Why did he do this? He pointed forward to the arrival of a new season in God's plan for man. This new season would include, not only Israel, but everyone who would hear the gospel and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Messiah of Israel was not just the Messiah for Israel, but he was the Messiah of all nations. He is the Savior, not only for the elect of God, but the Savior of all mankind. Will everyone be saved? Only those who believe and receive the gospel are saved. Only those who believe can benefit from the free gift of eternal life offered to us through the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When the disciples asked the Lord Jesus to eat something he told them that he had food to eat that they did not know about. The Lord Jesus spoke to the woman about living water. Now the Lord Jesus spoke to his disciples about spiritual food he was consuming. What is the food which Jesus consumed? It was the food of doing God's will. The Lord's food was doing the will of God.

This can also be our food today. When we obey the Lord it gives spiritual strength and vitality. The more we obey God the stronger we become. Our spiritual food is obeying God's will and putting his word into practice in our everyday lives.

Notice how often the Lord Jesus used word pictures like water and food to illustrate spiritual truth. This is basic to understanding the entire Bible. The Holy Spirit can teach us spiritual truth from God's word if we pay attention and think about what we are reading. Read, study, memorize, meditate, and pray over God's word. The Lord is saying more than "water" and "meat". He is talking about spiritual truth that we can only grasp and understand by faith.

4:39-42

The Samaritans believed that the Lord Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world. How did they come to faith in Jesus? It all started with the testimony of one woman who told everyone in her village that Jesus Christ was the Messiah. She was persuasive enough that people came out to hear the

Lord Jesus for themselves. When they heard the Lord Jesus speaking they came to personal faith that he was indeed the Christ the Savior of the world.

I find it interesting that this entire village easily came to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but the Jews who had the scriptures and the truth in the bible did not come to the Lord Jesus. Perhaps it was because the religious Jews had such an air tight religion that they could no longer open their heart to the truth of the Messiah standing right in front of them.

I find this attitude of having air tight theology very dangerous. People follow men's systems of theology so closely that they harden their hearts against any other reading of the Bible. I am a firm believer in the absolute truth, but we must remember that truth is not an abstract idea. Truth is a Person. Jesus said that he is the way, the truth, and the life. We cannot create a system of theology and call it "truth". At best, theology is useful as a signpost to point us to the real truth, and that real truth is the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

These unbiased people simply heard the voice of Jesus and they believed in him. It doesn't record in this account that the Lord Jesus did any miracles or even healed anyone. He simply spoke to them, and they believed that he was the Messiah, the Savior of the world. This is the kind of faith I think God is looking for. He is looking for people who will simply take his word and believe and receive.

The Lord Jesus only stayed there two days. After two days he had to move on to somewhere else. Notice that there are different seasons in God's revelation of himself to this world. The first day was the day of Israel. The second day is the day of the church. The third day is the kingdom when God teaches the nations true spiritual authority. In each of these days Israel, church, and the nations continue to exist, but one is always in the forefront as God reveals himself in a different manner in time and space. We see a progressive, chronological unveiling of God. However, we must always remember that God is outside of time and space. God is eternal. He was always Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In the same way, the true people of God are also eternal. Within Israel, the church, and nations there exist an eternal remnant of true believers in the Messiah. They are the one people of God within the three days of Israel, church and the nations.

Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

4:43-54

A nobleman had a sick son. He came to the Lord Jesus for help. Instead of leaving with the man the Lord simply told the man that his son was healed. The man took the Lord's word and went back home. On the way his servants met him to told him know his son was better. The nobleman figured out from the servants that the same time his son got better was the same time the Lord Jesus gave him his word. As a result this man and his entire household believed upon the Lord Jesus.

One other thing I noticed in this exchange. At first the Lord rebuked this man and said that unless he saw a sign he would not believe. This seemed to be a common theme for people and faith. People want to see something before they will believe. However, true saving faith always takes God at his word.

The Lord Jesus gave his word, and the man accepted the Lord Jesus at his word. The Lord did not go with the man or perform any sign or wonder. He simply gave him his word.

We have God's word today. We need to read God's word, study, memorize, meditate, receive, and believe God's word which he gave to us. Don't let any religious person cheat you out of God's promises in God's word. God gave us his exceeding great and precious promises. We can claim all of God's promises which he has made. God's word is eternal. It may have originally been written to certain people, but it is for us today as well. Read it, receive it, believe it. God's word is forever and ever. It will never fail to save, and deliver, and heal, and raise us from the dead.

Religion Or Relationship – John Chapter 5

5:1-9

The Lord Jesus was in Jerusalem because of a Jewish feast. This demonstrated that during his earthly life the Lord participated in religious tradition of the Jewish people. He met people where they were at. He went to the synagogue and he went to the temple. This was the religious and social structure he grew up in. It doesn't make it right or wrong. It was just how men lived at that time. How do people live today? Are we willing to meet people where they live, even if we disagree with their religious tradition or rules?

The Lord Jesus went into the temple and met a crippled man where he was at. The tradition of an angel stirring up water had not helped the man. Most of the time religious traditions do not help people. But the Lord Jesus met the man right where he was at. He asked him if he wanted to get better. The Lord spoke his word and this man was instantly healed. Tradition had never helped this man, but one word of power from the creator of the universe and he was instantly healed.

This healing took place on the Sabbath day. I believe the Lord did this kind of thing purposely on Sabbath days to reach the religious people of his day and provoke them. He did this so they would listen, and think, and repent of their hard hearts.

My take away from this passage is simple. We have to meet people where they are at. The religious traditions people hope in do not give them spiritual life, but if we are willing to go to where people are at then God can use us to help others to find true spiritual life. Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world.

5:10-16

The insanity of religious people enforcing Sabbath rules stands in stark contrast to the compassion of the Lord Jesus in healing a man. This contrast was made on purpose. The Holy Spirit, through this written account in the Holy Bible, demonstrated how religious men can put more emphasis upon their traditions than upon a man who was healed. Not only were they more concerned about religious rules than this man but they also were ready to persecute and kill the Lord Jesus. If this seems extreme that is because it is supposed to appear extreme. God was showing how insane religious people were in the light of God's mercy.

Whatever good intentions these religious men may have had they completely lost the heart of God's law. God's law was put in place to bring men to the Lord Jesus Christ. But men took God's law and turned it into a system of oppression and control. They wove religion and the world system together into one fabric. Men become dangerous when they take God's word to justify the principles of the world. We see this all the time in the modern church. We count numbers of people in the church in order to maintain prestige. This is the same principle the world uses to maintain power in corporations or in the government. More people equals more prestige equals more power which equals more provision and more protection. This is the world system. When churches embrace this they stitch together the world system and God's word. What is the result? You see the result right here in this story. They wanted to kill the Lord Jesus for healing a man on the Sabbath day.

How can we avoid this? The only way to avoid the danger of worldly religion is through humbling our hearts before God, repentance, and asking God to fill us with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is our protection from a hard heart and misapplication of God's word. Also, I would like to add that the church needs all the gifts which God provides through apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. We need everything we can get to build the church in the proper way. In the modern church not all of these gifts are recognized or allowed to operate. As a result, the church over time becomes more worldly and conducts itself according to worldly principles, instead of allowing the Holy Spirit to correct, rebuke, and humble us.

The Lord Jesus healed this man, and he told the man not to sin anymore or something worse might happen to him. There are situations where sin can lead to sickness. The Lord had mercy on him and healed him from his sickness. However, he told him not to sin anymore. Notice how this man went straight to the religious leaders and told on the Lord Jesus. As a result, the religious leaders persecuted Jesus. Do you think this man loved the Lord Jesus? How many people benefit from the Lord Jesus, and yet they have no love for the Lord Jesus?

5:17-23

Did the Lord Jesus break the Sabbath? Or did they perceive him as breaking the Sabbath because of their interpretation and tradition of God's law? We know the Lord Jesus never sinned so I'm sure what this means was that the Lord Jesus broke their interpretation of scripture and not the scripture itself. The Lord Jesus said that his Father worked and that he also worked. What was Jesus talking about? He seemed to be going against the law of Moses in promoting constant work. However, Jesus spoke in a spiritual sense. He said God was always at work sustaining creation. God did not just create the world in six days and then go on vacation. When God rested it was in a different sense than what we think of rest. A man might go to sleep when he rests but God never sleeps.

The meaning of the Sabbath, therefore, was changed from something meant as a blessing to man into becoming a religious burden which prevented people from using common sense. They could take care of an animal on the Sabbath but people could not be healed on the Sabbath? This showed how backward and upside down their thinking became. We see this same kind of logic in today's world also, but to an extreme that in my opinion even surpasses the people in those days.

The Lord Jesus described his relationship to his heavenly Father. He said that he didn't do anything except what he saw his heavenly Father doing. God the Father and Jesus were in complete harmony and agreement in everything which Jesus said and did. When you see Jesus, then, you see the Father. The Lord Jesus never did anything or said anything which was not a perfect image reflection of God the Father.

The Lord Jesus continued and said that even as God raised people from the dead, so also this power was given to the Son of God. Later in chapter 11 we see the Lord Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, even though Lazarus was dead four days. The Lord Jesus raised him from the dead. Jesus is God. He and the heavenly Father are one God. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are all one God.

We cannot honor God if we do not honor the Lord Jesus Christ. You cannot know God at all if you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus is the only way to God. He is the way, and the truth, and the life. No one can come to God except through the Lord Jesus Christ. John 14:6

Call upon the name of the Lord Jesus. Jesus Christ is the Lord, and He is our Savior.

5:24-30

One important message from this scripture was the reality of a final judgment. The Lord Jesus said everyone who died or will die would one day hear his voice and come out of their graves. They will be raised up and then they will stand before God to give an account of their lives. If a person did good they will be in the resurrection to life. Those who have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation. God separates people into two groups. The righteous and the evil. There is good, there is evil. There is light, there is darkness. There is holy, there is profane. This understanding of God and his universe is fundamental to understanding the Bible and salvation.

God made us. He is the creator. He is the judge of all things. Every single person who has ever lived will give an account of their life to God. Only those who have put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and his work upon Calvary will be saved. It is the gospel of Jesus Christ that saves men. What is the gospel? Christ died for our sins upon the cross, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day. This message is available to everyone who ever lived. Everyone who wants to know God can receive this message of salvation. God has made the good news available to anyone who seeks to know the truth of who God is. Anyone who will seek after God can find him, and the Lord will show that man how he can be saved through faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice this phrase that the Lord Jesus kept repeating: "the hour is coming". There is an appointed time on God's calendar that everything in the Bible will be fulfilled. A time is appointed for each man to die, for each man to be raised up, and for each man to face God on judgment day. No one will escape this. It is as real as the physical laws which hold this universe together. No one will get away from what the Lord Jesus described in these verses.

How do we prepare for this? How do we get ready? Call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ today. Call upon his name. Cry out to the Lord Jesus to save you, forgive you, and make you into a new person. Read Romans 10:9-10, 2 Corinthians 5:17, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.

5:31-40

It appeared the religious people surrounding the Lord Jesus tried to stumble him on legal technicality concerning having witnesses to verify a testimony. He took them up on their challenge and proved, using their own logic, that he had plenty of witnesses to verify the truth of what he said. Then he made it clear that human testimony was not necessary, or reliable, because he already had God's testimony of who he was. God testified to who his son Jesus Christ was. This testimony is in the Bible. Those who reject the Holy Bible reject God's testimony, and those who reject God's testimony reject the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus told them to search the scriptures, because the scriptures testify and point to him. There are many prophecies and descriptions of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Old Testament that testify to who he is. They should have known who he was. But they would not come to him. Why?

One reason was the way in which they read the scripture. They could only interpret scripture in a historical context. They were unable to see that the scripture applied to their present circumstances.

Have you ever met a Christian like that? They know the Bible but large portions of the Bible they claim no longer apply to the Christian today. These people attempt to minimize the supernatural in God's word and relegate it only to history. Why? Because they are not willing to deal with the living God who looks right at them in the face. They are unable to deal with a God who listens to every word they say, and watches everything they do. They can deal with a God of doctrine. But they cannot deal with the God who speaks today.

5:41-47

Who will be this person who comes in his own name?

The Lord Jesus pointed forward to a time when a man will come in his own name. This is the man of sin, the beast, the Antichrist. He is the ultimate worshiper of self. People will not think it strange when he calls himself "god" because that is the doctrine of Satan and everyone will follow the doctrine of Satan when this man of sin arrives in this world. When he reveals himself the Holy Spirit will remove the restraining power of the church. The church will be raptured up to meet the Lord in the clouds. With the church gone this Antichrist will take control of the entire world system. He will enter the temple of God in Jerusalem and proclaim himself to be a god.

Man in his fallen sinful state rejects the Lord Jesus Christ and worships himself. This is evident in history. Men worship other men and the names of men. We see this as a problem in the church when men follow the names of men, denominations, and man-made systems of theology. Men who are not baptized in the Holy Spirit naturally follow the names and doctrines of men.

The Lord Jesus asked them how could they believe when they received honor from one another? This was the worship of self by worshiping men. Men want to worship other men or themselves rather than worshiping God. This shows how much man hates God and loves himself.

The religious people in those days knew scripture better than anyone but they did not believe the scripture. The Lord Jesus said if they believed Moses they would have believed in him.

It is terrifying to think that people can know the scripture so well and yet not have a relationship with Jesus. Yet this is evident throughout the religious world and in churches that call themselves Christian.

Do not be deceived by those who worship self. Do not be deceived by those who say that Christianity is about the "here and now". It is not. It is about a world that is coming. It is about the future kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Jesus is coming back. We will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ and give an account of our lives. Are you ready?

Call on the name of Jesus.

The Bread Of Life – John Chapter 6

6:1-6

People followed the Lord Jesus because of the immediate benefit to their lives. Not all these people were interested in anything spiritual that he said to them. They may not have been interested in salvation, repentance, heaven, hell, or anything else. But they saw people who were healed. They wanted to healing as well. Suffering people looked for answers to their problems. In the Lord Jesus they found someone who provided real solutions to their problems. I'm not saying this was bad or good, but was usually one of the main reasons why people found the Lord Jesus. There was usually a crushing need in their life which drove them to seek a solution in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This was what happened to me. When I was a young man I was crushed beneath the weight of addiction and alcoholism. I suffered from various mental and emotional problems which came about as a result of a combination of several things including the way I was raised, and being exposed to people who were involved in occult practices, and also because of my own rebellious attitude. My rebellion was not directed at authorities or people as it was to isolating myself, living in my own head and imagination, and also seeking after experiences. I was lost in darkness and did not even know I was in spiritual darkness.

However, the Lord reached me. He constantly sent Christians to intervene at different stages in my life. They pointed me to the Lord. Finally, God got my attention. I was broken, I was humbled, and finally I listened to him.

Most people do not come to the Lord because they think they need spiritual salvation. Most people seek God because they are hurting as a result of their sin and foolishness. They are sick in their minds, in their souls, and in their body.

The Lord did not turn these people away. He healed them. He fed them. He gave them his word.

The most valuable thing the Lord offered was himself. Many people would receive gifts and healing and salvation from the Lord, but the most important thing anyone could receive from the Lord was the

Lord Jesus himself. He is life. He is light. He is everything a man needs to live, and have purpose, and meaning, and direction. He is all you really need.

6:7-13

The Lord Jesus challenged his disciples to feed the crowd of people who were gathered. He did this as a test to see how they would react, though he already knew what he would do. It was interesting that Andrew saw the possibility in a young boy's lunch of five barley loaves and two small fishes. The Lord Jesus took this, had the people sit down, he gave thanks, and distributed the food to the disciples. The disciples then distributed the food to the crowd of people. This was a miracle. They had plenty to eat and there was food left over. The Lord Jesus had them collect the leftovers so nothing was wasted.

This miracle was proof that God is our provider. Psalm 23 taught us that the Lord is our shepherd and we shall not want. The Lord provided them with the food they ate every day. The Lord Jesus taught his disciples to pray to the heavenly Father and say, "Give us this day our daily bread". This was an acknowledgment that God our Father is our Provider. We should never forget this. This was a basic lesson in the Christian life, but if we do not remember the lesson we will face temptations in our walk of faith. How can we believe God for anything in life if we cannot believe he would take care of our basic, physical needs like food and clothing?

Also, if we forget this lesson it causes us to live in fear. Living in fear is the opposite of living in faith. When people are afraid they make bad decisions, they make bad agreements, and the bad agreements pull them further away from a relationship with God. This pointed back to what the Lord Jesus taught in his parable about the seed which was sown in the thorns. The cares of life make us unable to bear fruit for God's kingdom. If we are not bearing fruit for God then what good are we as a Christian? See how this ties together? So, like I said, it is important to learn that God is our provider. This is the first lesson God taught Israel in the wilderness.

Deuteronomy 8:3, "And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."

This was the first temptation Satan hit the Lord with. Satan tempted Jesus to turn stones into bread. This was the test of provision. I also call this the "bread" test. This is basic to living the Christian life. We must learn that God is our provider.

6:14-21

These verses give us insight into why the Lord Jesus so often tried to minimize his miracles. He would heal a person and then tell them not to tell anyone else. He often did things in such a way as to not draw attention to himself. We see why here in these verses. These men were about to force the Lord Jesus to become a king. We might wonder how can anyone force someone to become a king? I do not know, but it was a real danger that the Lord Jesus avoided with the crowd. I can only remember twice where the Lord Jesus did this miracle of producing food for a crowd. Sometimes when the Lord Jesus did supernatural miracles he would only have a few of his disciples go with him. He would raise people from the dead behind closed doors. The Lord purposely avoided the position of a political leader. That

was not his goal or purpose. His goal was to be the Lamb of God who gave himself upon the cross of Calvary for our sins.

I'm always fascinated by this account of how the Lord Jesus walked upon water out to where his disciples were at. The scripture says when he got into the boat that they were "immediately" at the land. To me this sounds like some kind of supernatural relocation. It reminds me of how in the science fiction TV series Star Trek how they would get beamed from the surface of a planet up to the mother ship. The Lord Jesus literally beamed the entire boat of men from the sea to the land in one second. The only example which came close to this in the Old Testament was when Elijah was raptured up to heaven by the chariots of God. You might also say Enoch was translated as well. In the New Testament there was also Philip who witnessed to the Ethiopian eunuch in the book of Acts. After he baptized the Ethiopian in water Philip was raptured away by the Holy Spirit to another location.

This sudden disappearing and reappearing will probably be something which we will be able to do when we receive our new bodies after the resurrection. The Lord Jesus after his resurrection could appear and disappear at will. Is it possible that we will be able to move from one place to another like this as well?

Why would anyone doubt the rapture of believers? If Jesus can rapture an entire boat of men from the sea to the shore, then he can rapture all of us from the earth up to the clouds. It will happen. Get ready! The Lord Jesus will return and we will be changed and raptured out of here.

6:22-29

These people were confused as to how the Lord Jesus disappeared. They got in boats and went to where they thought he might be, and when they found him they questioned him. This was the danger the Lord Jesus perceived in them. This was an aggressive crowd of people. He escaped from them, but then they found him again. However, it appeared this time the crowd was smaller, or because they were confused by his disappearance were only asking questions. It was almost as if they might have challenged him.

The Lord Jesus turned the tables on them. Instead of replying to their implied accusations he told them plainly what they were really after was someone who would give them free food. They wanted a king who would take care of them. They were focused on their own needs or desires. However, the Lord wanted them to focus on their spiritual need. They were sinners and needed a Savior. They didn't need a new political leader. They needed to be saved from their sins. But before they could be saved from their sin they first had to become aware of this dangerous spiritual condition. They needed to know they were sinners.

In these verses he showed them that the priority in life was to learn how to live in the spirit. He told them to labor for food which does not perish. This "food" pointed to faith in his word. The word of God is our food and drink. This was the whole message of Israel wandering in the wilderness. God wanted them to learn that everything we need in life is found by faith in God alone. Our provision does not come from the natural world. It comes from God who made the natural world. If we are in a right relationship with God then everything in life falls into its correct place. The first priority is our relationship with God.

Many people have a lot that the world system offers, but because they have no spiritual life they are miserable, depressed, angry, hateful, and filled with malice. Look around at the powerful people with billions of dollars in the world. Can you tell me those people are happy? No, they are miserable people filled with malice, bitterness, and spite. Just listen to the words coming out of their mouth and see that power cannot satisfy the soul in man.

The Lord Jesus told them that the work of God was to believe in the one whom he sent. God sent Jesus Christ into this world. The most important thing you can ever do in life is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Anything else pales in comparison to this one thing.

Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day. Whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

6:30-35

Moses did not give them bread. They misquoted or misread the Bible. The Lord Jesus corrected them, and pointed to himself as the true bread of life. This was one of my favorite scriptures where the Lord spoke of himself. He said that he was the bread of life. He is our Provider, but more than that, he is our very provision. He is the bread we need for our spirit and our life. His word gives life. This is why I stress the importance of staying in God's word. We must hear the word, read the word, study the word, chew it, ponder it, meditate on it. We need to get the word in our mind, heart, and spirit. It is spiritual life for us. This world outside is full of death. We need the word of God to give us life. Jesus is the bread of life and the living waters.

The people asked the Lord Jesus to give them the bread. However, he stood right there. They had him. He was there with them. And yet they were still asking for "bread". They wanted something else beside the Lord Jesus. Isn't this just like people? We always want something more than or other than the simple word of God in Jesus Christ. We want some new formula or philosophy or teaching. But the Lord gave us himself. He is the word of God. He provided himself an offering for us. He is our food. He is our water. He is our life. He is everything we need to live.

6:36-40

We have a precious promise in these verses. The Lord Jesus said, "...him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out". If you come to the Lord Jesus, and surrender your heart and life to him, he will take you in. He will not leave you out in the cold. The Lord is not willing that any perish. The Lord Jesus invited us to come to him and find rest for our souls. He sent out the gospel invitation to anyone who would hear the message. Anyone who heard the message, and believed, and received, was welcome by the Lord. The Lord Jesus did not turn anyone away. Do I? Do I turn people away? Stop and think about it. God, please help me. Please help me never to turn people away. Help me to have an attitude that I am willing to help other people.

The Lord Jesus declared that he came to do the will of his Father. If we want to follow the example of the Lord Jesus then we should deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow him. We are not here to do what we want to with our lives. We are here to do God's will. God is our creator. He owns us. We need

to listen to him, and do what he says. Lay aside your own opinions, your own thoughts, your own stubborn attitude. Humble yourself and listen to what the Lord says. Hear, believe, receive, and obey.

The Lord Jesus said he was not going to lose anything his Father gave him. If we belong to Jesus then he will not lose us. It was the Lord who did the work to save us, it was the Lord who kept us, and it is the Lord who will bring us all the way home to himself. This gives great comfort and assurance of salvation. This is God's work in us. It is not the work we do. The only work God required us to do was to believe in his son Jesus Christ.

The Lord clearly said there would be a resurrection. Death is not the end. We will go on living. Those who reject God and the gospel and Jesus will go on existing somewhere forever but separated from God. What will that separation be like? God is light, God is love, God is life. What do you think being separated from light, love, and life will be like? Think about it.

Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord Jesus will be saved.

6:41-51

These people thought they knew the Lord Jesus because they knew his family and where he grew up. How many of us know that you cannot know a person based on where they grew up or their family? They certainly did not know who Jesus was, even though they thought they did. This is where familiarity can cloud the minds of people. When Jesus revealed who he really was they rejected him because they thought they already knew who he was. We don't know what we think we know. This requires humility to let go of our opinions and what we think that we know, and receive the truth about who Jesus Christ really is. He is the Son of God. He is God the Son. He is fully God. He is fully man. He is the God Man.

The Lord Jesus said that no one can come to him unless the Father in heaven drew him. No one can know who Jesus really is except God reveals it to him. This is what the Lord Jesus said to Peter. Peter said that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah of God. The Lord Jesus told Peter that he was blessed and learned this by revelation from God the Father. This also reminds me of what John says in 1 John 4:2, "*Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:*" Also, 1 Corinthians 12:3, "*Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.*"

The Lord Jesus continued to press upon his listeners that he was the bread of life that came down from heaven. He told them if anyone ate this bread he would live forever. Eternal life came by the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no eternal life except through the Son of God Jesus Christ.

6:52-59

The Lord Jesus did not speak literally about his flesh and blood. He spoke spiritually. His words were meant to be interpreted in a spiritual sense. It takes the Holy Spirit in us to enable us to interpret the spiritual meaning of God's word. Many times we can understand the Bible in a literal way, but there are

times when we interpret God's word spiritually. To know the difference is a gift from the Holy Spirit. Man in his natural mind is not able to truly discern what God's word says. It is spiritual. The words of the Lord Jesus are spiritual words. Jesus told us this. He said that the words he spoke were spirit and life.

We cannot separate the Bible from the person of the Lord Jesus. This is a mistake people make. They put so much emphasis on bible doctrine or systematic interpretation that they miss the living, active application of the present greatness of the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus is a real person. He did not stop being a real person when the Bible was finished being written. He is still alive today, and is actively involved in the lives of people today.

Those of us who feed upon the Lord Jesus have eternal life. We must continue to abide in him and in his word. His word gives us life for each day. Stay in the word. Stay in prayer, too.

6:60-71

The Lord shows us how to interpret what he said to these people. He said his words were spiritual. They were spirit and life. The people attempted to understand what the Lord Jesus said in a literal, earthly sense, but he spoke to them using spiritual language. The controversy over this grew so big it affected his closest disciples. Finally, the Lord had to confront the disciples over this controversy. Notice how people outside the church, even unbelievers, can instigate controversy which can blow like a raging wind through the church.

The Lord confronted his disciples and asked the twelve disciples if they also would go away. This confrontation seemed to snap them back into reality. As usual Peter replied for the entire group and affirmed their faith that the Lord Jesus was the Messiah, the Christ of God, and that he had the words of eternal life.

The Lord Jesus then said something interesting. He said he chose the twelve disciples, and yet one of the twelve was a devil, as well as those who turned back from him. He was talking about Judas Iscariot. The Lord knew who the traitor was in this group.

Notice in the King James Bible the verse where the disciples turn back was John chapter six verse sixty six. This is 666. Perhaps that is a coincidence, but it is interesting nonetheless at how tied together scripture is within itself.

There may be times when the Lord gives us a word we do not understand. It is at that point we must simply choose to trust in the Lord. We don't understand everything. It is impossible this side of eternity to understand much at all. What we do understand we should be faithful to obey. I think it is important to remember the proverb that says, "Trust in the Lord with all of your heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will direct your paths."

Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day, according to the scriptures.

The Power Of The People? - John Chapter 7

7:1-10

There was a lot happening in these verses. Let's start with the phrase "neither did his brethren believe in him". This was his natural family members. These were the other sons of Mary and Joseph. They did not believe that the Lord Jesus was who he said he was. We can also see that these men, as a result of their unbelief, operated under the principles of the world system.

What principle of the world did they display? They represented the idea that if you want to have prestige in the world then you have to promote yourself.

However, if you look closely at the life of Christ, he repeatedly did the exact opposite of this. He humbled himself. He told people not to reveal who he was. He told people not to spread it around that he healed them. When there was a lot of people amassing he would slip away and go somewhere else. He avoided men who tried to make him a king.

Why? Because the Lord Jesus did not operate according to the principles of the world system. He operated according to the principle of the kingdom of God. In God's kingdom, men do not make a name for themselves. They do not promote their own name or seek position, prestige, or power. Instead, in God's kingdom men humble themselves and seek to take the lowest place.

The Lord Jesus taught humility, and he also lived it. We see that the Lord Jesus humbled himself. He took the lowest place. He was obedient even to the death of the cross, the lowest form of humiliation ever known in this world.

When men do not believe in God then they fall underneath the spell of the world system. It is a spiritual law. It is like gravity. If you do not believe in God then you will live your life for yourself. Your goal will always be to exalt yourself, to lift yourself up, to justify yourself, to defend yourself, to provide for yourself, to protect yourself, and to worship yourself.

However, if a man knows the Lord Jesus he will not live this way. He will humble himself, and be obedient to the Holy Spirit. He will seek to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ and make the Lord Jesus known.

The Lord Jesus said he came in the name of his father. He did not come in his own name. There will be another who will come in his own name, and that man will be accepted by the world system. The world system in the last days will make a man their king. This king will come in his own name and will exalt himself as a god. Everyone will accept him.

But God's kingdom will come despite him. This man of sin will be overthrown and cast into the lake of fire. The Lord Jesus will take the throne because God the Father has prepared that throne for him alone. May God's kingdom come, and may God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

7:11-24

As he always did the Lord Jesus divided people into two camps. We cannot remain neutral toward the Lord. We will either be for him or we will be against him. When we are truly confronted by the Lord Jesus we have no other choice but to be on his side or against him. He does not leave in-between ground. Do we ever wonder why? It is because of God's nature. God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all. There is no compromise with God.

People kept these conversations private because they were afraid of the religious leaders. They were more afraid of men than they were of God.

Finally the Lord Jesus did go up to the feast and taught people in the temple. People were amazed at him because they knew his history. He did not have a certificate from their school of learning. How did he learn all of this? Where did he get his doctrine from? The Lord Jesus challenged them that if they would put into practice what he taught then they could find out for themselves that he spoke from God. The same is true today. If we will obey the Holy Bible we will find out that it is God's word. We can discover for ourselves that the Bible is true by putting it into practice in our every day life situations. Obedience will bring the knowledge of the truth of God's word.

The Lord Jesus knew these people did not believe in him. Not only were they in unbelief but they plotted to kill Jesus. The Lord Jesus knew their plans to kill him. However, here he was, reaching out to them on their own ground. He exhorted them to judge "righteous judgment". This is still important for us to remember today. Do not judge people by their outward appearance, but instead judge righteously. We should only judge people by their actions. What kind of fruit does this tree produce? Is it bad fruit? Then we can know we have a bad tree. If it is good fruit, we can know we have a good tree.

7:25-36

Did the Lord Jesus use the crowds to save himself from the religious leaders? The leaders wanted to arrest and kill him. The Bible says that it was not yet the Lord's "time" to be taken. The time for his arrest had not yet arrived. God has a set schedule for events to take place. Even though the scripture said that the religious leaders feared the crowd that does not mean it was the crowd which stopped them from arresting Jesus. It was God himself who kept his Son free. The Lord Jesus spoke boldly. Didn't he know people were out to kill him? Yes, he did know. Did the Lord Jesus put his trust in the crowd to save him from the religious leaders? Do you mean to tell me that the Lord Jesus trusted in the crowd who in just a few days would cry out to Pilate for him to be crucified? No, the Lord Jesus did not rely upon the "power of the people" to accomplish God's will. God doesn't rely on a crowd of people to accomplish his will in nations and in people.

This humanistic, political idea that we need to amass a crowd of conservatives to change the tide of politics and in so doing save our country is not from the Bible. This kind of thinking comes from the Satanic world system whose power is based on numbers. God's power is not based upon numbers of men. God demonstrated this over and over. He took a lowly Gideon and a few hundred men to defeat the Midianites. He showed over and over that he took a small group of people to destroy the strongholds of Satan. Look at these twelve lowly apostles of the Lord. How could twelve apostles turn

the world upside down? They did not have crowds of people on their side. They simply moved in God's power and boldly proclaimed the gospel.

Pastors should go back to preaching the gospel instead of trying to encourage their congregations to engage in politics. Let the dead bury the dead. Let the world take care of the things of the world. But our job is much higher than the world system. Our job is the kingdom. Our job is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our job is to influence the world, not through our humanistic efforts in politics, but in our faithful proclamation of the truth.

But can't we do both? To the scriptures! What did Jesus do? What did the apostles do? What is the example laid before us in scriptures as to the purpose of Christians and the church? Societal revolution? That may happen, but it will not happen through numbers of people, but rather through the faithful proclamation of the gospel.

7:37-43

The Lord's invitation to drink reminded me of his conversation with the woman at the well. The Lord used the word picture of natural thirst to point to something much deeper. Inside every man is a spiritual thirst for spiritual water. When we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ we are filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is like a fountain of water inside our spirit. I have experienced this and I know that it is true. What the Lord Jesus said here was the absolute truth. The Holy Spirit is like a well of water inside the soul springing up giving us abundant life. He provides hope, and peace, and a desire to live life fully. He fills up all the empty places in our soul, our mind, our will, and our emotions. The Lord is here. You can feel him if you will believe in him. The Lord desires to make himself known to us today.

There were people then who believed in the Lord Jesus. They believed he was the fulfillment of bible prophecy about the Messiah. Other people did not believe because they did not know the history of the life of Jesus. They knew the bible, but they did not know the history of Jesus. If they had known then they could have understood that he fulfilled every prophecy about the Messiah.

The Lord caused division among the people. There were always people who believed, and there were people who would not choose to believe in the Lord Jesus. There were sheep, there were goats. There were believers; there were unbelievers. There was wheat, and there were tares. This will be how it is until the end of the age.

Believe on the Lord Jesus today. He is the Messiah. He is the Christ of God. He is our Lord and our Savior.

7:44-53

The men could not arrest Jesus. It was not because the crowd protected the Lord Jesus. It was not the "power of the people" that kept the Lord Jesus safe from those who wanted to kill him. It was the word of God. Those who were sent to arrest Jesus came back to their leaders and said, "Never man spake like this man."

What did that mean? There is power in God's word. It was not yet the time for the Lord Jesus to be arrested. All he did was speak his word, and those men were powerless. It was not the power of the people that protected the Lord Jesus. It was the power of God's word.

We should proclaim God's word and not promote politics or the "power of the people". God's word is where the power to change the world is kept. It is in the proclamation of the gospel that the true hope of our country and the world abides.

It astounds to me that so many miss the simple truth of the gospel!

The religious leaders revealed that unless they said a man was authorized to preach then he was illegitimate. This reveals that man-made religion relies upon the approval and praise of men.

If a man was in the ministry because of the approval of man (including votes, or certificates, or titles, or ordinations), then he must ask himself if he was called by God. Some men were called by God and were affirmed by men. I am not against the affirmation of men in ministry. However, when we only rely upon men's approval and praise then we eventually end up like these religious leaders. They opposed the presence of God who stood among them. God stood before them as a man and they opposed him. This showed how fragile the approval of man was in ratifying God's authority or God's calling upon a man's life.

Again, those people thought they knew who the Lord Jesus was. They did not know his full life story, or they would not have made the argument about him coming from Galilee. They did not know the story of his birth, or how he was raised by Mary and Joseph. The Lord Jesus fulfilled all of the prophecies regarding the Messiah, but they did not take the time to investigate this. They judged him merely by appearance and the facts they assumed. This was how prideful, religious people operated. Make a note of this. Prideful, religious people do not really care to get to know you as a person. They are content with judging you from afar off.

The Whole World – John Chapter 8

8:1-11

The Lord Jesus was challenged again by the religious leaders. They tried to trap the Lord Jesus by bringing a woman caught in adultery before him for judgment. He turned the table on them and challenged them that whoever was without sin let him cast the first stone. Each man was convicted by his own conscience and walked away. The woman and Jesus were left alone. The Lord Jesus asked the woman if anyone condemned her. No one condemned her. Then the Lord Jesus said he did not condemn her either. He told her to leave her life of sin.

This confrontation revealed a lot about human nature, and also about the Lord Jesus Christ.

These men were capable of using this helpless woman as a tool to trap the Lord Jesus. They did not care about this woman. Remember, these were religious people. All they cared about was trapping the Lord Jesus so they could accuse him.

This also revealed to us that the Lord Jesus came to seek and save sinners. He did not come to condemn us but to save us. The Lord wants to save us from our sins. He wants us to leave our life of sin and follow him. He offers forgiveness. He paid the price for our sins. He simply asks us to receive his free gift of forgiveness and to agree with him. Turn away from a life of sin. Follow the Lord Jesus.

How should we then live? We should agree with God, leave the life of sin, and treat others in the same way the Lord Jesus did. The Lord Jesus offered grace and mercy to the woman. We should do the same. We should offer people grace and mercy. We should extend the hand of mercy. We extend the hand of grace to people. It is up to others if they want to accept God's free gift of eternal life.

Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day. Call upon the name of the Lord. Whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

8:12-20

The Lord Jesus is the light of the world. If a man follows the Lord Jesus he shall not walk in darkness but will have the light of life.

This statement reminded me of Proverbs 4:18-19, "*But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.*"

People who turn their back on the Lord Jesus go straight into spiritual darkness. What is that like? I don't want to find out. I would rather stay on the path of following the Lord Jesus. I've followed the Lord Jesus for over 30 years now, and I don't remember anymore what that kind of spiritual darkness felt like. I don't want to be reminded.

Sometimes the Lord will hide himself from us for a season to let us know what it felt like, but even in those seasons I knew the Lord was still there. I knew I could still hold to his promises in his word.

What is it like to not have any promises from God's word to believe in? What is it like to only have random positive affirmations to cling to? What is it like to cling to man-made philosophies or man-made systems of spirituality? It is darkness. The people who have never known the Lord do not know they are in darkness. They have the sparks of light that come from man's philosophy. Man is made in God's image so he can throw a few sparks of enlightenment here and there. But that is all it is. Sparks. Nothing that lasts but a moment.

"Sparks" reminded me of another verse. Isaiah 50:11, "*Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.*"

Those who follow man-made "sparks" will die in the darkness. They will die in darkness and then fall into an abyss of darkness that never ends. What is the darkness like? I do not ever want to find out. It is terrifying to me to even consider what outer darkness might be like.

I want to get as close to God's light as I possibly can. I want to live forever in the light of the Lord Jesus. He is the light of the world. I want to walk in the light of the Lord Jesus Christ forever and ever. He is my creator. He is my maker. He is my redeemer. He knows my name. I belong to him. Nothing can separate me from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus my Lord.

8:21-30

The Lord Jesus ascended back to heaven after his death, burial, and resurrection. His apostles were witnesses to his resurrection and his ascension back to heaven.

The religious leaders tried to cover up the facts of the gospel. Where the Lord Jesus went they would never be able to go. The only way to the Father is through the Son Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus said that he was the way, the truth, and the life. He is the only way to God. (John 14:6) The Lord Jesus told them that if they did not believe in him they would die in their sins. This is the heart of the gospel. If men do not believe in the Lord Jesus they will die in their sins. Let this sink deep into the heart, the mind, into the spirit. If men do not believe in the Lord Jesus they will die in their sins. If men do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ they will perish in their sins. Let this thought shake us to the core.

They should have known who the Lord Jesus was. The Bible they had pointed to who he was. He was the fulfillment of every type, shadow, prophecy, and word picture in the Old Testament. If they wanted to believe they could have because there was plenty of evidence of who Jesus Christ was. He is the Son of God. He is God the Son. He is the Messiah. He is the Christ.

The Lord Jesus said they would lift up the Son of Man. This pointed forward to his death upon the cross at Calvary. There were people who listened to him and who came to the saving knowledge of who he was when they saw him nailed to the cross. There were people whom God opened their heart and spiritual eyes. There were people who heard, saw, and believed in Jesus. They knew he was the lamb of God.

Others said they believed, but as we see in this chapter their faith only went so far.

How far are we prepared to go in our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? Are we willing to fully trust in him as our Lord and Savior? Are we able to believe that he is our provider, our protector, and our portion forever?

8:31-44

The Lord Jesus saw the heart of the issue with those who professed faith in him. He saw their root problem was sin in their lives. The only way to deal with sin was to stay in the word. The Lord Jesus said if they would continue in his word they would be his disciples indeed and they would know the truth and the truth would set them free. What was their response? They wanted to argue with him.

This resistance from the people who listened to Jesus demonstrated the truth of a parable which Jesus taught about the sower who went out to sow his seed. The seed fell on different kinds of soil. Some people initially heard the word of God with joy. But as time went on they were offended and turned away and had no fruit. This was what happened here between the Lord Jesus and these "believers".

They heard the word at first with joy. They believed in Jesus. But as they continued to listen they were offended. What were they offended at? The Lord Jesus said they had sin in their life. The only way they could be set free from sin in their life was to allow him to correct them. They must cooperate with the physician if they want to be made whole.

The problem most people have is that they feel like their opinions are as valid as God's word. They believe their intelligence is greater than the wisdom found in the word of God. They do not accept correction. As a result, they will remain in their sinful condition.

This is so important for anyone to grow spiritually. We cannot continue to grow if we do not continue to abide in God's word. If we stop listening to God's word of correction then we will stop growing. This also parallels the apostle Peter's teaching on spiritual growth in 2 Peter chapter 1. We must continue to add to our faith. We must continue to listen and abide in the word of God.

Because many people put their faith in bible doctrines but have a hard heart they convince themselves they are right with God. Even men who were living in bondage to sin convince themselves they are right with God because they intellectually believe a Bible doctrine. Knowledge or belief in bible doctrine is not enough. We must continue in God's word. We must continue to grow spiritually in the Lord. We must continue to put off the old man and put on the new man and be renewed in the spirit of our mind daily. This process of sanctification must continue and the only way it can continue is by continuing in the Lord's word.

These men chose rather to argue with the Lord and defend themselves. Because of the stubborn position these men took with the Lord Jesus he was forced to place them in the category of the devil. Everyone who rejects the word of the Lord find themselves on the side of the devil. This is what Adam and Eve found out. As soon as they rejected God's word they found themselves on the side of the devil.

God loves us and sent his Son Jesus Christ into this world to save us from ourselves, from sin, from the devil, from the world, and from death. Put your faith and trust in Christ alone. Call upon the name of the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.

8:45-59

They did not believe the Lord Jesus because he told them the truth. This is an amazing statement. It revealed to me that if someone tells the truth it won't matter if people are already in agreement with the devil. The devil is the first and ultimate liar. He is the father of lies. If men do not believe in God then they are on the side of the devil. You can tell the truth to people like this all day and they will never believe you. Why? Because they are liars. Liars cannot believe the truth because of who they are. This is startling to realize. It also should help us not to be so upset when people do not understand simple truths like a man is a man or a woman is a woman. Obvious truth like this is completely over the head of this generation. Why? Because they are liars and devils. They cannot hear or believe truth because they have sided with Satan.

The Lord Jesus said when a man is of God he hears God's words. If someone doesn't hear God's word it is because he is not of God. Instead, he is of his father the devil. Those who are of God hear God's words. People do not listen to Christians. Why? Those who don't listen to the Christian already took the

side of the devil. Who is of the devil? Every single person on this planet who rejects Jesus Christ is of the devil.

1 John 5:19, "*And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.*" The whole world is under control of wickedness, sin, the devil. The whole world. Let that sink in. That means every body. Every man, woman, boy, and girl on this planet who rejects Jesus Christ is wicked.

Ephesians 2:2, "*Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air; the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*"

The "prince of the power of the air" is Satan. This prince is the devil. This verse says every single person who rejects Jesus Christ belongs to the devil and the devil works through every person who is not a born again Christian.

This is scary but it is true. If you are a Christian right now you know what I am saying is true. If you are not a Christian and you read this you can't believe or accept this. Because I am telling the truth. I am quoting bible verses and telling the truth. If you reject the Holy Bible then you belong to Satan. You are of your father the devil.

These people could not deny the great works which the Lord Jesus did. Instead of believing in him and continuing in his word they turned on him. They accused him of being of the devil. This is what happens when people reject the truth. They begin to call what is good evil. They begin to call what is evil good. Wait and see. We will see this happen. Those who reject Jesus Christ call evil good. They call what is good evil.

It is amazing to me how clear the Bible is, how precise, how accurate. I love God's word. I love the truth. I love Jesus. Jesus is the truth. He speaks the truth. I want to listen to every word Jesus speaks to me. I ask for him to correct me and deliver me from deceit, delusion, and deception. I ask the Lord to shine his light on me. I pray the Lord will fill me with a love for the truth that will save, deliver, and protect me from the massive delusion sweeping this planet in the last days.

2 Thessalonians 2:10-12, "*And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*"

God gives people what they want. Do they want lies? God gives them a delusion so overwhelming they have no chance of finding the truth. You cannot be on the fence with God. If you do not get totally on the side of Jesus he will push you off the fence. You are not in control. You will submit to a master, whether that master be the Lord Jesus, or whether that master be the devil. Choose today. If you make no choice then the choice will be made for you.

Today is the day of salvation! Call upon the name of the Lord Jesus while you still have time.

The Blind Man Can See – John Chapter 9

9:1-7

The Lord Jesus noticed this man. This was different from most accounts where the Lord Jesus healed people. Most of the time the person would approach the Lord Jesus, or cry out to the Lord Jesus, or perhaps they would try to touch him somehow. This time was different. The Lord Jesus noticed this man. The gospel of John recorded events where the Lord Jesus reached out to people. Notice the account with the Samaritan woman and the account of when the Lord Jesus healed the man at the pool of Bethesda. Here was another record of the Lord Jesus when he noticed someone and reached out to them personally. John recorded the personal attention which the Lord Jesus gave to individual people in need.

The disciples paid attention when the Lord Jesus noticed this man. They asked the Lord Jesus a question which revealed their beliefs about how people commonly viewed the sick.

First, why did the disciples think the Lord Jesus knew the history of this man or his parents? Evidently, the disciples had this impression of the Lord Jesus. Did they think that he knew all about the people he came into contact with? Perhaps they thought he previously knew the man? Or did they think Jesus had supernatural knowledge of people and their personal history? It is interesting that they asked such an unusual question. It also revealed that they assumed the cause of the man's blindness. They assumed he was blind because of sin. Their question was whether the sin came from the man or his parents. They did not ask the Lord Jesus if there was a sin committed but rather who sinned and caused the man's blindness.

However the Lord Jesus knew the man's history he explained that the man's blindness was not the result of sin. This explanation seemed to infer that Jesus had the ability to know everything about a person's personal history. He knew this man was not blind because of sin. How did he know this? He knew it because he was God in the flesh. God is all knowing. The Lord Jesus knew everything about the people he met. He knew their thoughts, their attitudes, and their life stories. The Lord Jesus knew who people were. He knew Judas Iscariot was a traitor when he chose him as one of his twelve disciples. The Lord Jesus knows everything about us.

The idea that sickness is always a result of personal sin is still believed by many people today. There are cases where a person's sickness is directly related to their personal sin. Remember when the Lord Jesus healed the man at the pool of Bethesda he followed up with him later and told him to quit sinning or something worse would happen to him. However, there is not always a direct correlation between a person's disability or sickness and sin in their life. It is unfair to always assume that if a person is sick, or poor, or suffering in life that it is because of personal sin. Sometimes bad things happen to good people, as well. The book of Job teaches this lesson to us.

The Lord Jesus used a different method when he healed this man. I can't think of another example of where the Lord Jesus used spit and clay to anoint someone and heal them of blindness. He told the man to wash and he returned with his sight. What the Lord Jesus did for the man, combined with the man's obedience, produced his healing. He did what the Lord Jesus told him to do and came back with his

sight. This is a pattern which can be seen in the Bible. Remember Naaman the Syrian in the Old Testament is another example of this pattern.

The Lord Jesus explained the man's blindness was for the purpose of demonstrating God's power and glory. The Lord Jesus healed the man but the man's story was just beginning when he was healed.

The Lord Jesus came into this world to save us. He came to seek and to save the lost. Everyone who calls upon the name of Jesus will be saved.

9:8-12

The neighbors knew the blind man. He was around for a long time as a beggar and asked them for help. All of a sudden he was no longer begging and he was no longer blind. They were not sure if he was the same man. When the Lord touches a man's life it can have this effect. I know for myself I was completely changed when the Lord saved me. My thoughts, attitudes, and words were completely changed.

Some said he was the same man, others said he was like him, but he said that he was the same man.

They asked him how he was healed and he told them that the Lord Jesus healed him. The crowd was divided over this miracle. Usually when the Lord Jesus entered anyone's life it caused this kind of division. Some were for the man, some were against him, even though as far as he was concerned he was still the same man. The man who was blind testified that the Lord Jesus healed him. When this man was touched by the Lord Jesus he became a spontaneous evangelist. However, the man didn't know where the Lord Jesus was at.

A supernatural healing got attention. Men were divided into two groups by this event (believers and unbelievers). When the Lord Jesus touched the man he told others who healed him.

When someone is truly saved, healed, or delivered by the Lord Jesus he will naturally tell others his testimony. Our testimony will cause some to want to know where they can also find Jesus. Unfortunately, in this man's case, he did not know where Jesus was and could not lead them to Jesus either.

How can we apply this in our lives? Be prepared when you share your testimony and the gospel. Not everyone will believe you. The truth divides men into two camps (believers and unbelievers).

With the gospel there is no room for neutrality. Men reject or accept the truth depending on where they are themselves. Don't take it personal. Be faithful to share the simple truth of God's word with others and share what God has done in your life. A testimony is a powerful tool to reach others for the Lord Jesus. When you share your testimony be prepared to lead others to Jesus. Know how to go into the Bible and share scriptures which provides them with a basic outline on how to be saved. A good method I've found is the Romans Road plan. Another plan is the ABC plan of salvation.

- Admit you are a sinner (Romans 3:23)

- Believe in the Lord Jesus (his death, burial, and resurrection) Romans 10:9-13

- Call upon his name Romans 10:13

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 outlines the gospel. According to the scriptures, Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose from the dead on the third day, according to the scriptures.

9:13-23

Why did the people bring the healed man to the religious leaders? No doubt this healing caused a stir. Maybe some people were afraid. They did not understand what happened. They needed official guidance on the situation. This is common in human nature. When people are afraid or do not understand something they tend to look to political or religious leaders for guidance.

Why was there a point made about this happening on the Sabbath? I think the Lord Jesus purposely healed people on the Sabbath day to confront the false religious system. The Lord maximized his time by doing things on certain days and used certain methods to produce this type of effect, not only on the person who benefited, but also as a witness to everyone in Israel. The Lord Jesus created a testimony to all those from the leadership all the way down to the common man who stood by observing. The Lord's work maximized his environment in such a way to reach many people with the truth. He forced people to make a decision about who they believed he was. Notice how quickly this conversation turned into an attempt at determining who the Lord Jesus was.

The religious leaders gave the appearance of due diligence when they investigated the miracle. However, as we learn, their opinion about the Lord Jesus was already decided. They agreed that anyone who confessed the Lord Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue. Their mind was made up. This investigation was all for show.

Notice that when the Lord Jesus intervened in a man's life it divided people into two camps - believers and unbelievers. Ironically the unbelievers in this account were those who pretended to be religious and justified their unbelief on religious grounds.

The man who was healed had no problem believing the Lord Jesus was a prophet. Later, he would come to the full knowledge that the Lord Jesus was the Son of God.

Why did the religious leaders bring the parents into the conversation? Perhaps they thought they could use the parents to discredit the son. Perhaps the parents would confirm what they guessed. They guessed the man was really not born blind and the parents would confirm this, and that would be the end of it. However, bringing in the parents just confirmed the basic facts of the story. The man was their son. The man was born blind. The parents would not put themselves in danger by confessing that the Lord Jesus was a prophet or the Messiah. They knew the religious leaders already had their mind made up.

It is interesting that in an atmosphere of unbelief, and aggressive denial of basic facts, that the truth was so clearly and plainly proclaimed by common, simple people like this blind man and his parents. No

matter how the religious leaders tried to change the narrative they could not change the facts. The truth will always prevail, no matter what men agree to tell themselves.

Proverbs 16:5, "*Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.*"

No matter what agreements political and religious leaders made the Lord will still sit upon his throne and rule this world. The Lord Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords. No one will stop him from returning and judging this world. The earth is the Lord's and everyone who lives on it. The Lord is returning. Are you ready?

Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord Jesus will be saved.

9:24-34

The Lord Jesus healed the man and now he had a chance to testify in front of the religious leaders in his community. The religious leaders attempted to stamp out the man's testimony but instead provided the man whom the Lord Jesus healed a platform upon which to share his testimony and proclaim the good news.

The religious leaders already made up their mind about the Lord Jesus. They were not interviewing this man because they were interested in the truth. They thought they already had the truth. This was a mistake made because of human arrogance and pride. Never assume you are in the right. Always assume you cannot see everything and investigate facts carefully. These leaders were not interested in truth, though. They brought this man before them for this interrogation because they were confident they would put him in his place. Their agreement with lies was already made.

The man shared what he knew. He was blind, but now he could see. The Lord Jesus healed him. This was a simple story with facts and truth which were obvious for anyone to see.

They asked him the same questions again. This was a strategy to confuse him during the interrogation. They tried to get him to contradict himself or tell a different story.

The man was simple and logical. He already told them the truth once. Why did they want him to tell the story again? Now, we see some holy, common man sarcasm (which I appreciate). He asked them if they wanted to be his disciples. This simple man could see now the deceit in the religious leaders. The truth was so plain and obvious for anyone to see that he recognized the only reason they couldn't understand him was because they were deceitful. They were phony. They were pretenders.

The religious leaders said they were disciples of Moses but they lied. If they believed Moses they would have believed the Lord Jesus because Moses told them about "The Prophet" (Jesus) who would come. They did not believe in Moses, and they did not believe in Jesus. They were of their father the devil, the father of lies and deceit.

The man used rational logic and pointed out the obvious to the religious leaders. If the Lord Jesus was a sinner then he could not have healed him. Obviously, he must be from God, because he healed the man.

Rational, logical. The weight of truth was on the side of the man who was healed. But the religious leaders did not want to hear truth so they threw him out. They cast him out.

Notice the final words of the religious leaders: "thou wast altogether born in sins". Why did they say this? They were actually acknowledging when they said this that they really knew the man was born blind. They testified against themselves when they said this. But now the man could see.

Notice how people who take the side of the devil always point to a man's past and try to bring up the past even though this man's past life of blindness was clearly behind him now.

He had a new life now. A new life in Jesus. Old things passed away. All things were new for this man. They did him a favor by throwing him out of their church. New wine cannot be contained by old wine skins.

9:35-41

The man who was blind did not know where the Lord Jesus was at. However, the Lord knew where he was. The Lord kept tabs on the man. He heard he was thrown out of the synagogue. The Lord Jesus asked him a question. Do you believe in the Son of God? The man honestly did not know who the Lord Jesus was but was ready to believe anything the Lord Jesus told him because he knew Jesus was from God. He was convinced of the plain facts before him. There was nothing complicated about his faith. He readily believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and worshiped the Lord.

Notice the Lord allowed the man to worship. In the bible angels always stop people from worshiping them. Peter would not let people worship him. Paul would not let people think he was a god. But the Lord Jesus allowed this man to worship him. What does this tell us? It tells us that Jesus Christ is God. He is God in the flesh. He is the God Man.

The Lord Jesus said he came into the world for "judgment", so that the blind could see and those who could see would become blind. What did he mean by this? This echoed Isaiah 6:9-10, and was quoted often in the New Testament. A simple interpretation was that men have their own opinions which they think are as valid as God's word. As a result they won't readily hear, believe, and receive God's word. They think they already "see" and so when they hear God's word and reject it they are "blinded". In this way, for some people, God's word gives sight. For others, it makes them blind. It depends upon the heart condition of the man who hears God's word. This was exactly the same thing we saw in the parable the Lord Jesus told about the sower and the seed. It depends on the man's heart condition how he heard God's word.

The religious people thought they had the "truth" and so they would not listen to Jesus. The Lord's appearance confirmed men in their blindness because when they rejected him they were automatically putting themselves into the kingdom of darkness where they would be blind forever. This helps us, also, to understand how the Bible says Pharaoh hardened his heart, and then the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart. Whatever condition your heart is in when the Lord shows up that is where you will be from then on. You won't be able to change your position after the Lord shows up. This gives us some insight on the great delusion that will happen in the last days. People don't believe even in the face of

angels flying through the air proclaiming the gospel. It is a supernatural hardening of the hearts of men who already chose not to believe in God.

Don't harden your heart. Choose right now, while you still have time, to humble yourself, to repent, and to believe God's word. Believe the gospel. Put your faith and trust in the Lord Jesus. Today is the day of salvation. You may not have tomorrow.

He Speaks – John Chapter 10

10:1-9

The Lord Jesus taught with a parable about a door and sheep. These were metaphors that people could easily understand. The Lord sometimes used this style of teaching to communicate truth to people. Some people just heard a nice story, but others pressed on to ask Jesus the spiritual truth within his parables. In this way only those who truly wanted to know the truth would find it and be held accountable for the truth they uncovered.

In these verses the Lord Jesus identified himself as the "door". The Lord Jesus was the door for the sheep to enter in.

Anyone who attempted to take the place of the Lord Jesus as another doorway to God was a thief and a robber.

Every religion, philosophy or man-made system of ethics or self-help are created by thieves and robbers to lead us away from the true God. It is only through Christ Jesus alone we can know the one true God and receive eternal life. All other doors of salvation, or self-edification, or self-help as men call their systems, lead further and further away from God. False religion is bad enough, but today we have systems which directly promote self worship and quickly corrupt people spiritually. These programs harden their hearts against the gospel of Jesus Christ.

True sheep only follow the voice of the shepherd. Those who belong to the Lord Jesus will hear him, listen to him, and obey him. This goes back to an earlier statement the Lord Jesus made that those who are of God hear God's words, and those who are not of God do not hear God's words. True sheep flee from "strangers". These include motivational speakers, self-help gurus, false preachers, teachers, or spiritual leaders who promote another gospel, another Jesus, or another spirit. They do not promote solid Bible proclamation of Jesus Christ but instead promote a man-made system, whether that system is a religious system of theology, or a system of philosophy, or some other type of system of steps to improve self or enlighten self. All of these false gospels, religions, and philosophies are soundly rejected by a true born again Christian. The sheep recognize this is the voice of the stranger (the devil) and flee from it. Christians do not willingly subject themselves to false spirituality or self worship.

Jesus made it clear that he was the door to God and if anyone entered through him they were saved, could go in and out, and found pasture. This meant those who put their faith in Jesus were saved, will live for eternity, and were always provided for by God.

These scriptures deal with the problem of the enemy bringing in false gospels, doctrines, teachers, prophets, or messiahs. The Lord Jesus warned in Matthew 24 about deception in the last days. A lot of John's writings deal with last days deception including 1-3 John and Revelation. These writings deal with deception and warn the church about deception and deceivers in the last days. John's writing deal with discerning between true and false Christians and true and false Christianity.

How can we apply this? We need to stay in God's word, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is our protection in the last days. Man-made systems of theology will not save us or protect us. Only the Lord Jesus, the doorway to God, can save, and preserve, protect, and provide for us. We must love the truth (Jesus), and cling tightly to him.

10:10

The Lord Jesus described the devil (Satan, Lucifer, Serpent, Dragon, father of lies, prince of the power of air) in this verse. The devil is a thief. He came to steal, kill, and destroy. You can tell the people who are on the devil's side. They are thieves: they steal, kill, and destroy.

This is one of those verses I think should be memorized and kept close. We should remind ourselves the enemy is the one who steals and kills and destroys. The Lord Jesus gives us life and that we may have it more abundantly.

What does it mean to have life? Some people mistakenly think this is the "good" life as defined by the world system. Abundant life is not what the world defines as abundant. A man can have very little materially and yet still have abundant life. So what is abundant life? It is eternal life. It is the Holy Spirit living within the born again Christian. The Holy Spirit gives life to the Christian. This life is abundant because it never ends. It lasts forever. This is life that is not stopped by death. Nothing can hinder this abundant life. It comes from God. It is life that will conquer death. It is abundant life that wells up inside of a believer and enables him to love others, and forgive, and live at peace with people. It is life which produces the fruit of the Spirit.

The fruit of the Spirit is listed for us in Galatians 5:22-23, "*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*"

Abundant life reminds us that we do not live for this temporary existence on earth. Instead, we live for the kingdom of God which lasts forever and ever. Our life is not built on the sinking sand of this world system, but is instead built on the solid foundation of the eternal city of God, the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven. We are citizens of another world that will endure forever.

Abundant life does not allow us to settle for this transient life here on the planet. Instead, it causes us to yearn to be in our new body where we will never sin again. We will finally be made whole and complete, lacking nothing. We will be holy, and clean, and pure, and will never be defiled again by this world, or by the devil, or by our own fallen nature. Oh, I look forward to that great day. I look forward to being with the Lord forever. Amen, hallelujah.

10:11-18

The Lord Jesus described himself as "the good shepherd". What does a good shepherd do for the sheep? He provides for them. He protects them. He lays down his life for the sheep. This reminds me of how King David laid down his life for his sheep when he was a boy. He would fight against the lion and the bear, so when it came time to fight the giant Goliath he was not afraid. He knew that God would help him. The Lord Jesus was willing to lay down his life for his sheep. He knew that his Father was with him.

The Lord Jesus made a contrast between a true shepherd and something else called a "hireling". This was someone hired to take care of sheep but did not really care about the sheep. If a real emergency happened with a predator they would run. They had no courage to face opposition or threats. They would not face an enemy. They ran away.

Hirelings might be pastors who only serve a church as long as the numbers are up and they are getting enough money in their pay check. Or, they could be pastors who won't leave over money but will not warn their sheep about false doctrines, false preachers, or false ministries. Or, they could be pastors who do all of the above but view ministry as a career and are constantly looking for ways to make a name for themselves. All of these ideas characterize hirelings. They are not true shepherds. True shepherds lay down their life. They do not lord themselves over the flock, but live in such a way to be an example to others. They faithfully feed God's word to God's people and warn them to stay away from false doctrine.

The Lord Jesus also had other sheep. When he said this, in the original context, he referred to Gentiles who would come to faith in the Messiah. There would be people, who were not Israel, but would come to believe in Israel's God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

These sheep hear his voice. What does it mean to hear the voice of the Lord Jesus? I believe it starts with the written word of God, and it must always stay within the parameters of God's written word. The Lord does not contradict his written word. I do believe a man can hear the voice of the Lord. I believe this because I experienced God speaking to me, and I know the Lord speaks to people today.

Jesus laid down his life. How can we follow his example and lay down our life for others?

10:19-26

Again, we see the Lord Jesus caused division among people. I think it is a mistake to think as Christians that our goal is unity. This will never happen as long as we are under this current world system. The enemy will fabricate a false unity on the planet in order to bring in his man of sin, the Antichrist. The devil will destroy a lot of people while he is talking about peace. However, Jesus doesn't promote false unity or peace. He caused division from the beginning. He divided the day from the night. He divided light from darkness. The word of God discerned all the way down to the joints and marrow and he knew the thoughts and intents of man's heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

There is no neutral ground with Jesus. You are for him or you are against him. God is light, and in him there is darkness at all. If you want darkness, then you can't have Jesus. Jesus is all light, and love, and life. There is no lies, no darkness, and no death in Jesus. He is life. Abundant life.

Those who stood against the Lord said outrageous things against him. This shows how out of control and alarmed his opponents were. They were unhinged. They were completely irrational in the statements they made.

Other people were more reasonable and logical. They pointed out the facts. Since Jesus did good works he could not be of the devil. The people believed that the devil could not have given the blind man his sight back. I'm not too sure the devil couldn't do something similar to this, or at least trick people into believing he could heal someone, but here we see they were just using logic. Logic tells us the devil is not going to heal a blind man.

The text pauses here in the middle to let us know what time of the year it was and the geographical location. Why? Because everything in these records is rooted in historical reality. All this literally happened. These are not made-up stories about Jesus. These events literally took place.

The people again challenged the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus already spoke to them. He knew they were like the religious leaders who wanted to continue endlessly questioning the blind man who was healed. Their constant questions did not indicate they had any real interest in faith in Jesus. There was enough evidence already in who Jesus was. They didn't believe because they didn't want to believe in him. Jesus said they were not his sheep.

Jesus said these people did not believe in him because they were not his sheep. What does this reveal? What you can believe is determined by what kind of a person you already are. If you are an evil person and love sin then you will never be able to believe the truth because the truth condemns you. Instead, you reject the truth, because your life is a lie.

Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He rose again on the third day. This is written in the scriptures for us so we can believe and be saved. Everyone who will call upon the name of Jesus will be saved.

10:27-36

Do people today hear the voice of God? What did Jesus say in the scripture before us? The Lord Jesus said his sheep hear his voice. How literal should this be taken? We know the Lord Jesus used sheep as a metaphor. Was he literal when he said his sheep hear his voice? What does this mean?

I resort to a plain, common man reading of scripture. We don't have to explain this away by using a system of theology in order to remove what the Lord Jesus plainly said here. The Lord Jesus said those who belong to him hear his voice. The Lord Jesus communicated to people in a lot of different ways. Always judge anything you hear by the written word of God. The Lord will not contradict the scripture. He always speaks in agreement with the written word of God. I believe the Lord Jesus speaks to us today. We can hear his voice. I've experienced this in my life and I know God's voice is real. It is unmistakable.

Notice the Lord Jesus said that he knows his sheep. He knows their name. When the Lord spoke to me the first thing he said was my name. He said "Mike". The Lord knows those who are his. He knows their name. He knows everything about us. He knows what we are going to say before we say it. He knows our needs even before we do. He is completely aware of every detail in our lives.

He gives us eternal life. Eternal life is God's life, it is life that lasts forever and never ends. There is no end to the life which God gives those who belong to him. God will never lose anyone who belongs to him. This gives us great assurance of salvation. This encourages us that no matter what we go through we will never be separated from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Nothing can separate us from God's love. (Romans 8)

The people wanted to stone the Lord Jesus and accused him of blasphemy. However, the Lord Jesus proved to them from the scripture that they had no scriptural basis for accusing him of blasphemy. He did not say anything which was contrary to what was already written in scripture. He showed them a text in the Bible that could be used as a precedent for a man calling himself a son of God. However, by saying this, the Lord Jesus never minimized or denied that he was unique. He is the unique Son of God, and he is God the Son. God is three in one. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

What scripture from the Old Testament did the Lord Jesus quote? What was the original context of that scripture? See if you can research it and find out what the original meaning of those scriptures meant. Put into your own words what the Lord Jesus said and how he applied scripture to himself.

These particular scriptures are twisted by some today who are in cults and preaching false doctrines. Make sure you have a solid understanding of what the Lord Jesus actually said in these verses.

Jesus is coming again. Are you ready?

10:37-42

The Lord Jesus asked the people to be rational and logical about him and their accusations against him. He asked them to judge him according to the works he did. His words and actions were in complete agreement. What he said agreed with what he did. He asked them to look at the facts based upon his actions. Judge him by his fruit, in other words.

Instead, they persisted in their goal to destroy him. They refused to believe his words were backed up by his actions. They would not look at facts or evidence of the life of Jesus. Instead, they tried to twist his words so they could have a reason to accuse and kill him.

The Lord Jesus escaped the crowd and returned to the place where John the Baptist was at first. Again, we see the geographical location mentioned. This reminds us that this account was not a made-up story, but was historical events which took place.

People who believed the testimony of John the Baptist believed in the Lord Jesus. They said that even though John the Baptist did no miracle that what he said about the Lord Jesus was true. True believers do not need signs, wonders, or miracles in order to believe. They hear God's word and believe because they belong to God.

Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day. Call upon the name of the Lord Jesus today and be saved.

Raised From The Dead – John Chapter 11

11:1-4

This chapter began with the account of Lazarus, Mary, Martha, and Jesus. Lazarus was the brother of Mary and Martha. The Lord Jesus had a relationship with this family, and this was the same Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair. It was her brother who was sick.

Lazarus was sick with a deadly illness and he died. Before he died Martha and Mary sent a message to the Lord Jesus and requested his help. They believed that the Lord Jesus could heal Lazarus. In their request they described Lazarus as "he whom thou lovest". This shows us there was a deep friendship between this family and the Lord Jesus prior to these events.

The Lord Jesus received the message and told everyone that this sickness would not end in the death of Lazarus. Instead, the situation would bring glory to the Son of God.

Lazarus did die, but he did not stay dead. The Lord spoke his word of resurrection and Lazarus was brought back from the dead.

Is someone dead if the Lord Jesus resurrects them? When we believe in the Lord Jesus we never really die. God defines "death" differently than we do. The Bible does not define the "real" death as physical death but spiritual death. In the spiritual sense, Lazarus never died. His body ceased to function temporarily until the Lord Jesus resurrected his physical body but Lazarus himself, his real soul, never perished.

Before the Lord Jesus received the message from Mary and Martha he knew what would happen. He told everyone that this would not end with the death of Lazarus but instead would result in the glory of the Son of God.

One thought we can glean from this is that sickness, disease, and death are under the control of God. God uses these things to glorify his name. Why? We can't understand everything but we can know that God is good, and that everything he does is for the good of the universe, and also what is good for us. It is good for us at this time to suffer through this world of sorrow, but this will all come to an end one day. We will be raised up to be with the Lord forever. A time will come when death will no longer claim anyone. We will live forever with the Lord Jesus.

Call on the name of the Lord Jesus today so that you can be saved, so that you can go to heaven, and have eternal life. God loves you and it is not his will that any person perish in their sins. Repent and believe the gospel. Jesus Christ is Lord.

11:5-16

The Lord Jesus loved the family of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. He had a friendship with them prior to when Lazarus got sick and died. Why did the scripture point out that the Lord Jesus loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus? I think this statement was set in contrast to what came next. In the next sentence we read that the Lord Jesus delayed two more days when he received the message. Why? His delay was in the context of his love for this family. He did not delay because he did not love them.

This is a lesson we should remember. God's delay in our life does not mean he does not love us. God loves us. He is never late, remember this. Is death a problem for someone would can speak a word and raise someone from the dead? This delay would not hurt them in the long run but it was necessary. God's delays are necessary for his own purposes.

The disciples did not understand why Jesus wanted to go back to the same place where his life was in danger. Jesus replied by explaining about walking in day light and not at night. What did Jesus mean by this? What was Jesus talking about? One possibility was that sometimes when we "walk in the light" and follow God's will it takes us into dangerous places. Danger or safety is no indication of whether or not we are walking in the light of God's will. Sometimes walking in the daylight of God's will leads us into dangerous places. What other applications can you think of which explain what Jesus said?

Jesus described Lazarus as asleep. He purposely uses the word "sleep". The disciples did not understand and thought he talked about natural sleep. Jesus did not talk about natural sleep but said Lazarus was dead. Jesus used the word "sleep" for death.

Sleep is temporary. You can wake someone up from sleeping. This is the way the Lord views death for the believer. It is a temporary condition which he can bring us out of. The New Testament continued to use the word "sleep" to describe the condition of death for the believer.

Jesus used language the disciples misunderstood because they thought in natural terms. They misunderstood Jesus because Jesus used words in a different context than what they were used to. He said sleep because it was more accurate from the point of view of Jesus than "death" which sounded more permanent than sleep. Everything Jesus said was filled with meaning and life. There were layers of meaning to what Jesus said, just like his parables. Every word of God is active and alive and filled with meaning and purpose.

Jesus told the disciples that Lazarus was dead before they left so that when they arrived and saw it was as Jesus said then they would believe him. Jesus tried to spark faith in their heart through these circumstances. The Son of God would be glorified so that men would believe in God and put their trust in Jesus.

Do you believe in Jesus? Have you trusted in him as your Lord and Savior? Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

11:17-27

As a result of the Lord's delay they arrived after Lazarus was in the grave four days. Is four days significant? It proves beyond a shadow of a doubt he was dead. He was not just unconscious. He was decaying in the grave. He was dead beyond any doubt to the people there.

The town of Bethany was mentioned in this scripture. Anytime I see the mention of a place I am reminded that these are not made-up stories, but are literal historical events which took place in our world. These places still exist to this day. You can go right to where this place is located today and stand on the same ground where Jesus walked.

Martha heard Jesus arrived and went to meet him but Mary stayed home. There was a contrast often made between these two sisters. In these verses I am not sure what the contrast implied or symbolized. Martha went out to meet the Lord Jesus and engaged him in conversation right away.

She expressed regret that he did not come sooner but said she believed even now God could use him to help. I'm not sure what she thought he might do at this time. Jesus challenged Martha by telling her what he would do momentarily. Lazarus would rise from the dead. Martha misunderstood and thought he talked about the doctrine of the resurrection at the last day. Jesus was not teaching a bible doctrine. He was talking about himself and what he would do in a few minutes. Jesus told her that he is the resurrection and life.

What did this mean? Every bible doctrine is only a sign post pointing to the present greatness and reality of the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus gives us life and life abundantly. He is here now to give us life. He is here to baptize us in the Holy Ghost and give us eternal life.

Acts 2:21. Call on the name of Jesus and be saved.

11:28-37

God is never late. The underlying lesson for me in this passage is that God is not late. Everyone here, including Mary, thought that Jesus was too late to do any good. They thought that he was constrained by time and space in the same way in which they were. Since Lazarus was dead then Jesus was too late. But as we shall see later in this chapter the Lord Jesus was never late. His delay was on purpose. His delay allowed time for Lazarus to go to "sleep" so that Jesus could wake him up and thus demonstrate the power of God over death to these people.

Martha told Mary that Jesus asked for her, so she went out quickly to meet the Lord. Other people who were with Mary followed her when she left. Mary fell down at the Lord's feet in grief and confessed that she believed he could have helped her brother if he had been there earlier. She believed in the Lord, but she did not believe the Lord could help her now that Lazarus was dead. He was too late. Notice how hard it was for men to believe in the present greatness of God. They believed in the God of history. They believed in the God of the future. But they had difficulty believing in the God who is here right now, standing before us, looking at our situation, living in this present moment with us. Jesus was so present with them that he was touched by their emotions. He cried when he saw their grief and mourning. He wept with them.

The point I would like to underline in these verses was that Jesus wept with these people. Even though he knew what he was about to do in raising Lazarus from the dead, he still entered their momentary grief and sorrow. The Lord Jesus saw the end from the beginning, and yet he was with them in that moment and felt their emotion. He was touched by the feeling of their emotion.

Don't ever think that God does not care about the smallest detail in your life. Yes, he has a lot to be concerned about in the world. But he is also with you in every thought, in every word, in every emotion in your life. He is an ever present help. He will never leave us or forsake us.

Do you sense the presence of the Lord in your life today? Do you believe he sees what you are going through? Turn to the Lord with all of your heart. Humble yourself under his mighty hand. Cast all your cares upon him, because he cares for you.

11:38-46

Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. This was an event Jesus led up to since he first heard the news Lazarus was sick and told his disciples that he would wake him up. Lazarus was dead four days and Martha reminded the Lord that the corpse was now stinking from rot.

Jesus told them to take away the stone. Despite Martha's protest he persisted in his plan. No doubt these people had no idea what Jesus would do but they obeyed him anyway.

This is a good point to remember. Even if you do not understand what the Lord is doing just keep on obeying him. Do what he says.

Jesus told them if they believed they would see the glory of God. It was only by putting our faith in the Lord that we can truly "see" the works of the Lord. If we do not have faith in God even if we see someone raised from the dead we won't believe it. We won't believe the facts right in front of us. This is what we see here. Some of the people still did not believe in Jesus and went to report on him to the religious leaders.

Jesus prayed to Father God. He prayed out loud so people could hear his relationship with God. Jesus prayed so they would see what happened next was God's plan. It was God's plan to bring glory to Jesus and show people that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

At the word of Jesus the dead man rose from the grave. Jesus resurrected Lazarus. This resurrection involved a man's spirit returning to the body, and that body restored from a state of decay to life. This was a miracle on many levels. It was the resurrection power of God. Jesus gives life! He speaks and we have life. His word gives us spiritual life, and his word raises us up from the dead.

Jesus told the people to help Lazarus out of the grave clothes. Jesus gave him life. People were expected to help the man get out of the grave clothes.

We will all die one day. The question is when you leave your body will your spirit return to God or will you be separated from God forever? To be separated from God forever is a death which is a permanent

state of separation from God. Instead, put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus died on the cross for your sins and mine. Receive the forgiveness God offers through his son Jesus. Put your faith in Jesus. Call upon his name so that you can be saved and have eternal life instead of eternal death.

11:47-57

Here we see the religious leaders got organized in their opposition against Jesus. Until now the attacks on Jesus were somewhat random and spontaneous, but now they purposely organized together to put Jesus down. What were they alarmed about all of a sudden? Because Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. This miracle raised the bar and the religious leaders were now afraid of the Lord Jesus. They were afraid he would take away their power, position, and prestige. They were afraid he would destroy the nation of Israel. Ironically, by their rejection of the Lord Jesus, they made it certain they would all lose their positions and that the Romans would dismantle Jerusalem and the nation of Israel.

The religious leaders were smart enough to understand the stakes were high but chose to do the one thing which made their doom certain. Jesus was their only hope, and by rejecting him, they put the final nail in their own coffin.

Strangely, during this meeting the high priest said that Jesus must die to save the nation of Israel. Even though he meant one thing those who heard him realized he prophesied. He was, after all, in the seat of the nations' leader, and as such, was used by God to say what would happen. However, we know what this man meant when he said this was different from how it was interpreted as prophecy. This is an example of how original context or intent has little to do with how scripture interprets itself.

How is it possible this evil man spoke the truth? This reminds me of how God used Balaam to speak the truth. Also, speaking of Balaam, God used Balaam's donkey to speak. God can use anything to communicate in any way he chooses.

Jesus not only died for Israel but for all people scattered throughout the nations. This points forward to how the gospel went to every nation and many Gentiles believed in the Messiah.

From this point, the religious leaders were determined to kill Jesus. For them, it was only a matter of opportunity. They put out a hit on the Lord. Basically they hung out a wanted poster for Jesus.

Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He rose again on the third day. All who call upon the name of Jesus will be saved. Acts 2:21, Romans 10:13

Death and Resurrection – John Chapter 12

12:1-8

This specific time frame of "six days" reminds us these events were historical. We have specific times mentioned in the text. A reminder that the Bible recorded historical events which literally happened.

Jesus had a meal with his friends. His friend Mary expressed her worship by anointing Jesus with an expensive ointment. This act of love and worship was protested by the traitor Judas Iscariot. This traitor covered up his hard heart by pretending to care about poor people. What does this remind you of? This passage revealed to us that Judas was actually a thief and helped himself to the money in the bag. Jesus responded to Judas with a rebuke and warning him to leave her alone. Jesus said that she did this to prepare for his burial. These words must have been the final straw for Judas because not long after this he made arrangements with the religious leaders to betray Jesus.

What can we learn from these verses? True devotion to Jesus does not consider the personal price or sacrifice or the monetary value of the sacrifice. Worshiping the Lord does not consider the price. The Lord taught us to count the cost. Whatever price we think we pay does not compare to the price which Jesus paid upon the cross of Calvary. The Lord Jesus is worthy of any sacrifice which we make in his name.

True love for Jesus inspired people to sacrificial surrender of their lives, resources, possessions, whatever they had. They surrendered it all to Jesus.

Does this mean we give our money to every good cause that comes along? Surely Judas represented a good cause. What better cause is there than giving to the poor? But Jesus knew the cause of Judas was a fake cause. There are churches and ministries who take the money of Christians for fake causes like Judas. They pretend to care about people, but really they just want your money. We must be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.

Another thought here was that Judas was one of the 12 disciples and yet he was a thief. There are people who can convince you by their appearance and words they are Christians but inwardly they are wolves in sheep's clothing. Jesus warned us to beware of wolves in sheep's clothing. We should always be listening to the Holy Spirit and pay attention when the Holy Spirit warns us about someone. Not everyone who talks about God is really a believer. Not everyone who professes the Lord Jesus is known by him. Many will say in the last day "Lord, Lord" but the Lord does not know them. They are workers of lawlessness.

Remember there will always be tares among the wheat. Until Jesus comes back churches will always be filled with false brethren.

Jesus told them he would soon die. He clearly let them know what was about to happen to him but they did not believe what Jesus said to them. They did not believe or understand that Christ must suffer these things, and die on a cross for our sins, and be buried, and rise again on the third day.

12:9-19

People not only wanted to see Jesus but also Lazarus. Why were people interested in Lazarus? Because he was dead and came back. He was a good example of the fascination with near death experiences. A lot of people were curious about the other side. Was this a morbid curiosity? Whatever the motivation the crowd thronged them. The religious leaders watched all of this and were alarmed.

The religious leaders wanted to kill Lazarus as well as Jesus. Why? Because he was popular. Anyone who attracted a crowd was a threat to the religious leaders. They were afraid of losing followers. This gives us a clue on how man-made religious systems work. It operates on the principles of men making a name for themselves (or their "ministries", or their "churches"), and then bringing large numbers of people under their system. So, basically the pride of life works in these systems to bring about carnal power, provision, and protection. This system results in men worshiping self, or their organization. It might start as an attempt to honor God but as time wears on the spiritual laws at work in these systems turn men to pride and self-worship. This is how the world system operates. It is inevitable.

Therefore, when the religious leaders saw crowds following Jesus and Lazarus they were immediately threatened by this.

These verses give us a description of the entry Jesus made into Jerusalem. This was the prophesied entry into Jerusalem of the Messiah King. Knowing, or unknowingly, the crowds fulfilled prophecy by crying out to the King as he entered into Jerusalem on a donkey.

At that time the disciples did not discern these events were the fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Only later did they understand how these events were the fulfillment of the prophets. What bible prophecies are being fulfilled today?

The religious leaders were alarmed at the crowd following Jesus. Again, this was because of numbers. More numbers for Jesus meant less numbers for them. They were afraid of Jesus because of his popularity.

The religious system made by man is based on the reputation of men. This is why the scriptures say they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. Their system was man-made and depended on men supporting them. It was a system that could run completely independent of God, even though they gave lip service to God.

Today is the day of salvation. Turn to God in humility and put your faith in the Lord Jesus before it is too late. You do not know what a day may bring forth. Seize this moment right now to make Jesus Christ your Lord and Savior.

12:20-26

Greeks looked for Jesus. We were not told why they looked for Jesus. Their purpose in approaching Jesus was urgent enough that the disciples of Jesus were willing to help them. They approached Philip first, and then Philip went to Andrew. Both disciples approached Jesus to give him the request of the Gentiles. On first glance it might seem Jesus did not reply to their request, but he did.

Why does the Bible include examples of Gentiles who approached Jesus or requested help from Jesus? It pointed ahead to a time when the Gentiles would be grafted into the tree of Israel. Israel is the root, and Gentiles were grafted into this tree by faith in the Messiah. However, while he was in his earthly body the Lord could only reach so many people at one time. He had a certain amount of time to fulfill his Father's will on earth. During his earthly ministry Jesus focused primarily on Israel and his 12

disciples. However, he did minister to Gentiles at times, for those who had the faith to touch him, and those who persisted in reaching him like these Greeks.

What did Jesus mean when he spoke about a corn of wheat falling into the ground? This is a word picture, in the same way that Paul used word pictures in 1 Corinthians 15 to describe resurrection. Before resurrection we have to die. A seed cannot bear fruit until it first goes into the ground and dies. And then the life within the seed comes up in resurrection to bring forth new life. Jesus looked ahead to his death, burial, and resurrection. He knew he could only reach so many people in his earthly body, but after his death, burial, and resurrection the gospel would go to every nation in the world. When Jesus talked about a corn of wheat falling into the ground and dying he talked about himself. The only way he could reach all the Gentiles who pressed in to see him was for him to die and be raised from the dead. Then, he would send the Holy Spirit and everyone would have an opportunity to be saved.

Death and resurrection are fundamental principles in the Christian life. In order for a disciple of the Lord Jesus to inherit eternal life he must be willing to let go of his own life. We have to surrender our life to Jesus Christ. I've heard this many times from preachers but one day it hit me personally. We literally have to surrender our lives. We have to let go. We cannot have control of our own lives. We must surrender. This surrendering to Jesus means we deny ourselves. We no longer live the way we think best, but instead we ask Jesus how he wants us to live each day. We read the Bible not just for information, but so we can learn what the Holy Spirit wants us to do that day.

We cannot love self and love Jesus at the same time. We must be willing to completely let go and abandon self so we can be filled with the Holy Spirit. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit we have eternal life. He who has the Son of God has life. He who does not have the Son of God does not have life. We must be filled with the Holy Spirit. We must be born again by the Holy Spirit. Many people have religion and bible doctrines, but they are not born again. They do not have the Holy Spirit living in them. They want to hold onto their own lives and pretend to be religious (for their own motives, like Judas Iscariot).

Finally, if we live for Jesus and abandon self, then the Father will honor us. What does that look like? We don't know yet, but for starters we will live forever with the Lord, and will have a new body. We will be given a resurrection body like the Lord's, and we will live with him forever.

12:27-36

Jesus said his soul was troubled. This is similar to what happened later in the Garden of Gethsemane before he was arrested. His soul was troubled. We cannot understand the depth of what this trouble was for the Lord. In his humanity did he dread his own death? Probably, but it was more to it, because he would not have a peaceful death, but one in public before others who mocked him. He also bore our sins upon himself, and we cannot imagine now the full depth of that pain upon his spirit and soul and body.

Jesus asked a question. What shall I say? Should he ask his Father to save him from this hour? He would later in the Garden face this question again. But he reminded himself right away that it was for this purpose he came into the world. His goal was to offer himself as the Lamb of God, a sacrificial

substitute for the sins of the world. He would die a death he did not deserve to save men who did deserve to die in this manner. He took our place.

He prayed to God the Father in heaven and received a reply. A voice spoke from heaven, in the same way as the voice of the Father spoke when he was baptized and when he was transfigured. Men heard the voice, but explained it away, as men do when they are confronted with God. Men explain away God as if they know better than to give in to faith in God. The fool has said in his heart there is no God. (Psalm 14:1)

Jesus called the devil "the prince of this world" and plainly declared that what he would accomplish through his death, burial, and resurrection would completely cast out the devil. 1 John 3:8, "...*For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*"

"Lifted up" points to the crucifixion upon the cross. Jesus knew the type of death he would die. He knew what would happen before it happened, and many times told people what would happen. He told them ahead of time so that when it did happen they would believe in him.

These people who questioned him were unbelievers. They still tried to trick him into contradicting himself with scripture. They tried to expose him as being inconsistent with scripture, but they were the ones who did not know the scriptures. They believed they had superior knowledge of the Bible than the Word of God himself.

Jesus replied to their ignorance when he told them that the light would only be with them a little while. This pointed to the fact that there was a window of time for salvation. Today is the day of salvation. The window of time for their salvation was fast closing. He exhorted them to believe in him while they still had time before they were confirmed in the darkness of unbelief and separation from the living God.

Jesus hid from them. This showed the crowd was a threat to him. They were irritated enough to do him harm if they could, but it was not yet his time.

Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day. All who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus will be saved.

12:37-43

When Jesus told the parable about the rich man in hell and Lazarus (who went to paradise) Abraham was quoted and said that if people did not believe the Bible they would not believe even if someone rose from the dead. What greater miracle could men see than someone rising from the dead? Yet we know the Lord Jesus rose from the dead and still men did not believe in God.

Jesus did many miracles during his ministry but people still refused to believe he was the Messiah, the Son of God, the King of Israel. They did not believe in him. I've often said that the number one thing that stops people from believing the facts right in front of them is that they have already agreed to a belief, or presupposition, previous to the current incident or situation. As a result of this previous agreement their minds are unable to process anything happening now which contradicts what they

believed previously. In other words, if people already have decided they do not believe in God then miracles will not convince them either. The religious leaders already agreed Jesus was not their Messiah. It did not matter what he did or said, they would never accept him.

This was what the prophet Isaiah said would happen. Isaiah lived hundreds of years before the events which took place in the New Testament. Yet he saw all of this ahead of time. He said people would not believe in the Messiah. They would be blind and unable to hear him, unable to believe in him. Because of their previous agreement with a bad interpretation of scripture they were unable to let go of their pride. They would not relinquish their positions. However, there were some who did believe.

The few religious leaders who did believe in Jesus did not share this publicly. They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

What does "praise of men" mean? It is a system of life which most people live in and never consider. It is a man-centered system of life where provision, protection, and portion in life are a result of self-worship and the worship of other men. It is a lifestyle independent of God. It is a life principle of a man-made system independent of God. Most people live like this. They have no concept of what living according to faith means.

Living according to the "praise of God" means living according to a heavenly principle of life. This is the kind of life which we see Jesus lived. He did not rely upon any system or any man for his provision, or protection, or portion. He was in total reliance upon his heavenly Father for everything in life.

It is difficult for people who have position in the world to let go of it. They are convinced their life depends upon their reputation, the name they make for themselves, and upon the system they are part of. However, God went to great lengths in the Bible to teach men that we do not live by bread alone. We do not depend upon the world system for life. We depend upon God. Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." This is living in dependence upon God.

Those who live according to the pride of life love the praise of men. What does this mean? It means the more numbers of men you have underneath you, the more followers, the more provision and protection you have. However, this is an illusion. It is the way the world thinks. God can take away those numbers over night and prove to men that their provision and protection does not come from men, or from a man-made system, but from God above.

12:44-50

This passage underlined for me the fact that Jesus is God. He made it clear that he spoke the words of his Father. His Father is God. Jesus and his Father are one. God is three in one. God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These agree in one. God is three persons, and yet one God. Hard to wrap our human minds around this, but it is the revelation of who God is.

These verses underline the importance of not only hearing God's word but also believing God's word. If anyone hears God's word and does not believe he will eventually face judgment. We are responsible and held accountable for believing God's word when we hear it.

How can I apply this to my life? Be careful to believe God's word. As humans we will not always understand everything that God speaks. How could we? But we are held accountable for having faith in God. Without faith it is impossible to please God. We must have faith in God and trust in him. To choose unbelief over faith is to call God a liar. We will be held accountable for unbelief. We will be held accountable to God if we do not believe in his word.

Jesus is the light. If we do not believe in Jesus and his word then we will live in darkness. When you leave your physical body you will no longer enjoy the light of the sun, moon, or stars, and the spiritual darkness you lived in on earth will become your permanent home in eternity. I cannot comprehend why anyone would choose darkness over light.

Lord, shine your light on me. Do whatever it takes to keep me in the light. Do whatever is necessary to keep me abiding in the light of your son Jesus Christ. Amen.

Love One Another – John Chapter 13

13:1-5

We have a specific time frame for events. This happened before the feast of Passover. Passover is a key word in this because as we will see the Lord Jesus is the Passover lamb which was sacrificed, not only for Israel, but also for the sins of the whole world. This scripture provided a time frame but did not tell us the location of where Jesus and his disciples were. Perhaps the reason for this was because the location was hidden by the Lord since there was a traitor in their midst. The Lord did not want to allow Judas to betray him too early before this last supper with his disciples.

Jesus did everything according to God's schedule and timetable. There was a season and a time for everything in the Lord's life. Now was the time for him to prepare his disciples for his imminent death, burial, and resurrection.

In this intimate scene between the Lord and his disciples the devil was mentioned. A traitor was in their midst. Here the love of God was in stark contrast to the hatred and betrayal of Satan.

Jesus came from God and was returning to God. He came to give his life as the sacrificial lamb for our sins. This was the symbol of the Passover meal, the sacrificial lamb. Jesus came from God as the lamb. He was returning to God after his resurrection in order to fulfill his role as our high priest forever. He lives forever making intercession for us now.

Jesus demonstrates his love and humility by washing the feet of his disciples. In that time and culture only house servants and slaves washed the feet of people. Jesus was taking the role of a slave or a servant when he washed his disciples feet.

God became a man. He was born in a stable, grew up in a remote village, was rejected by his neighbors and family, persecuted by the religious and political leaders, and ultimately died on the cross. What kind of life did Jesus live? It was a life of humility. He demonstrated the heart of God in the life which he

chose to live. Love and humility. This is the heart of God. God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

Jesus did all of this because of his great love for us.

13:6-17

Why did Simon Peter have this reaction to the Lord? He did not like to see his Lord acting like that. He did not want the Lord to wash his feet. Remember, this kind of work was done by household servants and slaves.

Here Jesus took the role of a servant and washed his disciples' feet. Peter did not like this at all. He thought the Lord should have people waiting on him instead of serving others.

Peter's mindset was still controlled by the attitude of the world. People in the world do not think leaders should be humble like this. A leader should be proud and have other people wait on them and not like how Jesus acted. The Lord demonstrated something that was completely foreign to the mindset of these men. They never saw any religious leader act like this.

True spiritual authority is not like the authority in the world system. True spiritual authority is not afraid of humility.

World system authority is built on the foundation of pride. Men who lead in the world stand upon the pride of life. They exalt their own names. They make a name for themselves. Their reputation is their life. They do not humble themselves or admit they are wrong or bend down to wash someone's feet.

However, the Lord Jesus, who is God himself in the flesh, knelt down and washed the feet of these men. What kind of God is this?

He is the creator of all things. He is love. He is light. He humbled himself and came into the world as a baby laid in a manager. He announced his birth to outcast shepherds. He lived in a remote village. He was misunderstood, maligned, persecuted, and his closest friends did not comprehend his mission or purpose.

If we do not allow the Lord to do his work in us then we have no part in him. We must trust in the Lord to make us righteous and clean. We are not able to wash ourselves spiritually. The Lord must cleanse us. We cannot cleanse ourselves. Jesus cleansed us through his death, burial, and resurrection. He continues to cleanse us by the Holy Spirit applying the finished work of Christ to our lives. The Holy Spirit applies God's word to our every day lives. This is how we are made clean and kept clean by the Lord.

Jesus washed his disciples feet to give them an example of humility and serving one another. He said they were not greater than their master, and so they must also do the same. We must love one another and serve one another. Let each one of us esteem other people better than ourselves. Do not think of ourselves more highly than we ought but rather with sober judgment. We are not better than any one else. We all need one another.

Jesus washed his disciples feet. Let us now wash the feet of our brother as well. Amen.

13:18-30

Jesus told his disciples ahead of time that he was betrayed by one of the disciples who were present. No one had a clue Judas Iscariot was a traitor, but the Lord Jesus knew it. He knew Judas would betray him to the religious rulers. Jesus revealed what would happen before it happened so that when it happened they would believe him.

This is the reason we have Bible prophecy. God tells us ahead of time what will happen so when it happens we will believe in God. Prophecy in the Bible is so specific that if anyone pays attention at all they can know it is God.

When I look around today at current events I know Bible prophecy is being fulfilled. There are wars, rumors of wars, earthquakes, and pestilences all happening at this moment. I know end times bible prophecy is being fulfilled right in front of our eyes.

Jesus was troubled when he revealed there was a traitor. It breaks God's heart to know some will fall away. There are people who betray the Lord and turn their back on their profession of faith. Even though God knows these people and what they will do it still breaks his heart to see people turn their back on him. May the Lord help us to stay in his word, stay in prayer, and stay humble. It is only by God's grace and his Holy Spirit that we are kept from the evil of our present time.

When the Lord Jesus revealed there was a traitor in the camp Simon Peter went to work to flush out the traitor. What was Peter thinking? Did Peter think he could take care of this traitor himself? Did he think he would get some straightening going on? Peter appeared to think he could handle the situation. Peter asked John to ask Jesus who was the traitor.

Jesus revealed who the traitor was by dipping a piece of bread and then handing the bread to Judas. When Judas received the bread Satan entered him. When Jesus did this he was handing Judas over. Up until that moment, even though Judas was a traitor in his heart, the Lord protected him. But at that moment the Lord Jesus removed his protection from Judas and Satan took him over completely.

This is a warning to us. Be careful to guard your heart. (Proverbs 4:23) If you persist in disobedience, unbelief, stubbornness, then at some point you will cross a line with the Lord. (Proverbs 29:1)

May God help me to have a humble heart and walk in the fear of the Lord always. May God help me to always have sober judgment of myself and never trust myself, but always rely upon God's grace and the Holy Spirit.

All of this transpired in front of the disciples but no one knew it or realized what happened. Verse 30 said Judas went immediately out and it was night. That night was literal and spiritual. Judas left the light of Jesus and went out into the night of spiritual darkness. He chose the side of the devil and now could no longer come back. He was doomed.

May the Lord search our hearts and deliver us from any thought, or attitude that would lead us to becoming a traitor to the Lord. May the Holy Spirit shine his light upon our hearts and help us to walk in truth, in the light, in love, in the Holy Spirit. May the Lord chasten us, correct us, rebuke us, reprove us, and do whatever is necessary to keep us close to him and walking in the light of the truth.

Jesus is the way, and the truth, and the life. There is no other way to know God except through Jesus Christ. (John 14:6) There is no other name given under heaven whereby men must be saved. (Acts 4:12) Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord Jesus will be saved. (Acts 2:21)

13:31-38

After Judas left Jesus announced the Son of man was glorified. When Judas left it set in motion the final series of events that led to the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. This was why he said the Son of man was glorified. The culmination of his life's work on earth was coming to fulfillment. He would shortly complete the work which God gave him to accomplish on earth.

He told his disciples that where he was about to go they would not be able to follow. Why did he tell them this? Perhaps to give them comfort when they all ran away at his arrest? Jesus knew they could not walk this road to Calvary with him. He comforted them ahead of time and let them know they could not endure what he would go through by himself.

Jesus taught his disciples to love one another. This was one of the greatest ways to reach the world. When Christians love one another it shows the world that we are the disciples of Jesus Christ. I remember I experienced this when I was a young Christian. I lived in a Christian community and people truly did love one another. It was only for a short period of time in my life but I won't ever forget it. It was just a taste of how the true church lives.

Peter was confused as to why he could not follow the Lord. He professed he would follow the Lord anywhere even if it led to death. But Peter did not really know himself very well. The Lord knew Peter better than he did. The Lord told Peter that he would deny Jesus. The Lord already knew what each disciple would do before they did it. This shows us how much God knows us. He loves us, and he knows everything about us.

My take away from this chapter is where Jesus told us to love another. This is our greatest tool in evangelism. Love one another.

The Way, The Truth, and The Life – John Chapter 14

14:1-4

The Lord shared disturbing information about a traitor in their midst. He told them about his death on the cross for a while. They didn't understand everything Jesus said but they felt the gravity of his words.

The Lord encouraged them in the midst of the darkness. Surrounded by enemies and threats the Lord exhorted them to not allow their hearts to be troubled. This is a word we really need to hear in our world today. We are surrounded by threats and uncertainty on every side, and yet I believe God is telling us this same message today, "Let not your heart be troubled." The Lord speaks this to his children, for those who have trusted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior: don't let your heart be troubled.

There is a proverb I am reminded of here. "*Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.*" (Proverbs 3:25-26)

Jesus pointed them to a sure future where hope would not be disappointed. The Lord did not say they would not endure suffering in this life, but pointed them to the real hope in heaven. Jesus told them in his Father's house are many mansions. We cannot begin to imagine now what those mansions are like. What will that house be like? We cannot yet understand the home which God has made for us in eternity. The Lord encouraged us to look beyond this temporary life on earth to our real life in eternity with our heavenly Father.

Jesus made a promise that he would return. After his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension there would be another time in which he would return. The apostle Paul mentioned this "day of the Lord" often in his letters. He looked forward to the return of Jesus Christ to the earth. The Lord will return for his people. He returns to his people. His plans for us are good and they are to give us a future and a hope.

These verses are some of the most precious promises I can think of in the Bible. Jesus went away in order to prepare a home for us and he will return to receive us back to himself. Where he is we will be also. We will live forever with the Lord. I look forward to this. I look forward to living with the Lord forever.

14:5-11

Jesus told his disciples he would die on the cross, be buried, and rise again on the third day. After his resurrection he would ascend back up to his Father in heaven and send the Holy Spirit to them. Jesus told them he would go away to prepare a place for them and would come back to receive them to himself that where he was they would be also. Thomas said he did not know where Jesus was going and how could he know the way?

Pay close attention to the Lord's reply to Thomas. Jesus said that he is the way. He is the truth. He is the life. There is no other way to the Father. The only way to gain entrance to heaven and to the heavenly Father is through the Father's son, the Lord Jesus Christ. What is the implication of this? It destroys the modern, feel good philosophy that all religions lead to God. All religions do NOT lead to God. All religions lead to hellfire. The only way to heaven and to God is through the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Any one who promotes any other way to God falls under the curse. Any one who promotes any other message than the gospel is under a curse. They are under the curse of God's wrath. (Galatians 1:8)

Philip wanted Jesus to show them the Father. Jesus affirmed again that if they had seen him they had seen the Father. Jesus is the express image of God in a man. Everything he did and everything he said was in complete harmony and agreement with the Father. Jesus and the Father were one in spirit, one in purpose, goal, and essence. Jesus is God. God the Father is God. They are one God. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is three in one.

We don't have to understand this. We have to trust in God's word and the revelation of God through the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other truth outside of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe by faith and accept God's word. When we believe God's word we agree to the truth. Any other response to God's word except faith will put a man into spiritual darkness. Hear God's word, believe God's word, receive God's word, abide in God's word, obey God's word.

God's word is our life. God's word gives us life. Jesus is the word of God.

14:12-15

The promise in these verses seems to be open ended. Can we pray and ask for absolutely anything? The key is to remember that we pray in the name of Jesus. If you worked for a company and went to the store and used their credit card you would only buy what was needed for the company so that you could do your job. I think this is what we see here in these verses. When we pray in the name of Jesus we ask for what is according to God's will to fulfill God's purpose. We pray according to God's will.

God may want to give you a new car. But do you ask for a new car because you are covetous? Or do you ask for a new car because you need a new car in order to do God's will? Only you and the Lord can answer these questions. However, don't limit what God can do in answer to prayer. The Lord can do miracles. He can do abundantly above all that we could ever ask or think. There is no limit on God's ability to answer prayers.

The Lord wants us to go do good works. These good works are fruit in our lives. We are supposed to be fruitful and do good works. Ephesians 2:10, "*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*"

Good work is evidence of God in the life of the believer. If you have no fruit in your life then you should be asking the Lord what is the problem. Ask the Lord to search your life and remove any obstacles in your life that prevent you from bearing good fruit for God's kingdom.

James 1:22, "*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*"

Don't deceive yourself when you think that all you need is intellectual agreement of Bible doctrine. Many people deceive themselves that what is needed is a clear understanding of Bible doctrine. The religious leaders in the day of Jesus had clear Bible doctrine, but their fruit was evil and wicked. They were an evil and wicked generation even though they had plenty of Bible doctrine and knew the scripture. It is not enough to know bible doctrine. We must bear fruit. The only way you can bear fruit is by having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. You must have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

14:16-26

Jesus promised his disciples that he would pray for them. He prayed for them specifically that Father God would give them the Holy Spirit. In these verses Jesus called the Holy Spirit the "Comforter" and also called him the "Spirit of truth". He is both. What does the Holy Spirit do according to Jesus as explained in these verses?

He brings everything into memory that Jesus said. Everything Jesus taught his disciples the Holy Spirit brought back to their memory after Jesus ascended to heaven. He taught the disciples all things and brought back to memory everything Jesus said. The Holy Spirit reminded them of God's word.

The world cannot receive the Holy Spirit and they cannot know him. Jesus said the world cannot know him because they cannot see him. This tells us something about people in the world and how they live. The life of the unbeliever is based upon what they can see, hear, taste, touch, and smell. In other words, they live only according to the material world. However, the material world is not true reality. It is only a temporary matrix we live in right now. But this is all an unbeliever can understand. It is only when a man has faith in God that he can understand the universe as it truly exists. Scripture says that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom.

Those who have faith in Jesus and the Father will have God living with them. A believer has fellowship and communion with God. The Lord makes his home with the man who keeps his word. The world cannot keep God's word because they do not believe in God's word. They only believe what they can see. But a Christian believes what he hears from God. When a Christian hears God's word he believes it and he keeps it. As a result, the Holy Spirit lives with him every day. God makes his home with the believer who trusts in him.

Because Jesus is alive those who trust in him shall live also. Christians will live forever with the Lord. Because he lives we shall live also. This is a great assurance of eternal life that we have in this promise from the Lord Jesus.

14:27-31

The Lord gives us peace that is different from the world. What kind of peace does the world give? The world gives false peace. The man of sin will offer a false peace to the world when he comes. The Bible teaches us that there is no true peace for the wicked. What kind of peace does Jesus give us? The Lord gives us peace even when the world around us is going crazy.

The Lord's peace surpasses human understanding. God's peace will protect your heart and your mind when there is no logical reason for you to have peace. Your life may appear to be falling apart on the outside, but inside your heart you can be at complete peace with the Lord. This is a spiritual peace which is given to us by the Holy Spirit. He protects our heart and our mind from fear, panic, anxiety, unbelief, and doubt. He continues to remind us of God's promises in his word. He continues to remind us of how much God loves us. He reminds us that Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins. He reminds us that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin and unrighteousness. He reminds us that God our Father is our provider, and our protector, and our portion forever.

We need to agree with the Holy Spirit. Don't give in to your flesh and to this world and allow fear and unbelief to get a foothold in your mind. We are to bring every thought into obedience to Jesus Christ. Put on the full armor of God and cast down every vain imagination. Resist every thought that contradicts the truth in God's word. Submit yourself to God and resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Jesus told us what would happen before it happened so that when it happened we would believe in him and trust in him. This is the purpose of Bible prophecy. It is to build our faith, encourage us, and comfort us. This is why Paul said when he taught about future events that we were to "comfort one another" with these words. Bible prophecy is for the purpose of edification, encouragement, and comforting God's people. Sadly, I see a lot of Christians use bible prophecy to install fear and anxiety in people rather than godly edification. People use bible prophecy as sensationalism in an effort to build the number of subscribers to their YouTube channel or twitter feed. May God help us to learn how to use God's word in God's way for God's purpose.

Jesus said the prince of this world was coming. He spoke about Satan in this verse. He said the devil had nothing on him. There was nothing the devil could do to stop the Lord Jesus from obeying the Father and completing his mission. All the devil could do was hate and kill, but in so doing, he helped God fulfill his purpose in providing Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God.

All things work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose.
Romans 8:28

Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day, according to the scriptures. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Acts 2:21, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

Produce Fruit – John Chapter 15

15:1-6

Jesus used an agricultural word picture to help us understand his relationship with his Father and also his relationship with us. The main thing I take away from this is that we have to stay connected to Jesus. If we are not connected to Jesus then we can't do anything right. How do we stay connected to Jesus? The Lord tells us in these verses.

If someone claimed to believe in God but showed no evidence of faith in their life they would eventually fall away. People who were not engaged would not last. Faith and works always go hand in hand. Faith produces fruit. True faith produces fruit. This fruit he talked about was spiritual qualities like Paul described in Galatians 5:22-23. Also, fruit was seen as general good works, or leading other people to salvation. Also, good fruit is seen when Christians share God's word with other people, even if those people don't get saved. A Christian sharing the gospel displays good fruit in his life. A Christian who never opens his Bible, never prays, never witnesses to anyone else is not producing fruit. This lack of interest in God's word, prayer, and witnessing probably means the person has no spiritual life in them.

To produce fruit we need to grow spiritually. To grow spiritually we have to stay plugged in with Jesus. How do we stay plugged in? We stay in God's word, stay in prayer, and put into practice what we learn in God's word. We obey the Holy Spirit when he speaks to us.

Notice how Jesus said that his word cleanses us. This reminds me of the verse where it says "washing in the water of the word". God's word has a cleansing, sanctifying effect upon the believer. People who love their sin will not love God's word. But the man who loves righteousness and truth will hunger for God's word. He hungers for the word because the word cleanses his soul. God's word makes us clean.

God the Father chastens us so we can produce more fruit. This is like how a gardener will trim a fruit tree or bush so that next season it will produce even more fruit. God will at times in our life trim us. This means we might go through seasons of suffering in life. Chastening is not a pleasant experience but it produces righteousness in us. It causes us to produce good works that are clean and done with the right motive towards God. These are works which will stand through the fire at the judgment seat of Christ when Christians receive their rewards.

Without the Lord we can do nothing. Jesus is the source of our spiritual life. If we are in anyway disconnected from the Lord we will suffer. Our life will not produce the right kind of fruit, if it bears any fruit at all. The only way we can be spiritually productive is to stay plugged in with Jesus. We must stay in his word and stay in prayer. We must listen and obey the Holy Spirit. We must humble ourselves when God corrects and chastens us.

Those who do not abide are disconnected. A branch that is disconnected has no life in it so it withers up and dies. These branches are used for fuel for the fire. Don't be fuel for the fire. Be a branch bearing fruit for God instead.

Christ died for our sins. He was buried. He rose again on the third day. Everyone who calls on the name of Jesus will be saved.

15:7-14

This is a wonderful promise the Lord gave us in these verses. If we abide in him and his words abide in us we can ask what we will and it shall be done unto us. On the surface this sounds like a blank check. However, if we think about this verse we realize that the promise was contingent upon abiding in Christ and his word abiding in us. If we abide in Christ our heart would not be controlled by idolatry and covetousness. We would not seek things for ourselves, but rather what we would pray for was in line with the example of prayer Jesus gave his disciples. We would pray for God's kingdom to come upon this earth. We would pray each day for our daily bread and God's protection from evil. We would also forgive people and request God's forgiveness. Our goal would be to glorify the name of the Lord Jesus and that his kingdom come upon this earth, and that his will be done on earth as it is in heaven. This was what it meant to let God's word abide in you. Your mind and heart would be controlled and directed by God's word. When we are under God's word in this manner our prayers are according to God's will. When we pray according to God's will he hears our prayers and we have the answers from God.

God is glorified when our prayers are answered. God is glorified when there is fruit in our lives. What is this fruit? It could be our personal testimony, or good works, or serving others, or sharing God's word. Surely if we lead others to Jesus Christ this is good fruit. Paul also mentioned the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23.

By obeying the Holy Spirit we continue in the Lord's love. We keep ourselves in the love of God by obeying and keeping God's word. The Lord's commandments for us are to love God and love one another. Everything else in the Bible is summed up in loving God and loving one another. When we live like this then we continue in the Lord. If we harden our hearts, allow bitterness to control us, or having unforgiveness towards anyone then we separate from the Lord. To continue with the Lord with must continue in grace, mercy, compassion, forgiveness. We cannot be hard hearted towards anyone. We cannot carry a grudge or unforgiveness. We need to love people. This is hard. It is impossible unless we have the power of the Holy Spirit living in us. But he gives us the Holy Spirit so we can love. (Romans 5:5).

Jesus said greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends. This is what Jesus did. He laid down his life. He gave his life for us upon the cross at Calvary. He died for us so that we would not perish in our sins. All we have to do now is believe in him, receive him, and continue to abide in him. He is here. He is with us. He will never leave us or forsake us. Call upon the name of the Lord and be saved.

15:15-17

Why did Jesus say that he did not call them servants? Because a servant did not know what his lord did. But the Lord called them his friends. Why did he call them his friends? Because everything Jesus heard from his Father he made known to them.

Everything God wants us to know the Lord Jesus revealed. The Lord is our friend because he opened his heart to us and shared with us his thoughts, his feelings, his goal, his purpose, his will. A servant does not know his master. But we know the Lord. Our relationship with the Lord is not as a slave. We are his servants. We are bond-slaves of the Lord because he purchased us with his own blood.

But this slavery to God is different from the slavery of the world. In the world people are ignorant and in darkness. But God does not want us to serve him in blindness. He gives us light so we can see and chose to obey him. Being a servant of the Lord is being a friend to the Lord because we serve him out of a free will. God gave us a choice. He demonstrated how much he loved us and asked us to choose him. We serve him because we love him.

Out of this heart of love we bring forth good fruits. Our fruit could be good works, or the qualities listed in Galatians 5:22-23, or sharing God's word with other people. When we serve the Lord from a heart of love our fruit will remain. Nothing we ever do in the name of the Lord will be forgotten or wasted. Read 1 Corinthians 15:58.

The Lord pointed us to a relationship with the Father in the name of Jesus. What did this include? It meant that we live according to the name of the Lord. Our life is not controlled by our own name or the names of men but our life is in the Lord Jesus. We are in him and his word is in us. When a man lives

like this the Father hears his prayers because he comes to God through the Son of God. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. There is no other way to the Father except through the Lord Jesus Christ.

15:18-27

Jesus reminded his disciples and warned them that the world system would hate them. Why did he tell them this repeatedly? Because he did not want them to be offended. Remember how John the Baptist was confused when he was thrown into prison and left to die? It is easy for Christians to become offended at God when they suffer hardship, especially if the suffering is unjust or unfair or undeserved. Christians tend to think in terms of justice. There is nothing wrong with this, but we have to remember also there is a much bigger picture God sees in the universe than we do. Sometimes suffering is necessary. For now, it is necessary that the world hate the disciples of Jesus. If the world loves you, then you probably are not a true disciple of Jesus Christ.

Jesus told his disciples to remember that if the world hated you (and it will) that it hated him first. Do we think we deserve better treatment from the world than what Jesus received? There was something about Jesus that the world hated. Jesus told us the reason why the world hated him. The reason they hated him was because he exposed their sins, their sinful nature, and he exposed their self-worship. His life shined a bright light of contrast against all false religion which pretended to love God but really didn't. Jesus demonstrated for us once and for all what love for God really looked like.

We are not greater than the Lord Jesus. If he suffered from the hatred of the world then we will also suffer from the hatred of the world. This hatred takes a lot of forms. It can mean that people are apathetic toward you. In other words, they have no respect for you. They disregard you. They will not listen to you, even if you are not even talking about biblical topics. Just talking about general subjects they ignore you. But it gets much worse than that to the point where they would murder you if given opportunity. The only thing which restrained Satan from killing all Christians was God's protection over the church and his people. God is our protector.

If people truly believe in God they will believe in Jesus because Jesus is God. And if they listen to Jesus then they will also listen to one of the servants of Jesus. Those who are of God hear God's words. This is a good concept to keep in mind. When people won't listen to you don't take it personal. They don't listen to the gospel because they don't belong to God. It has little to do with you personally, even though sinners will always make it about the messenger and not the message. This is how they cloak and disguise their rejection of the truth. They make it about the messenger. They make it personal. But it is not personal with you. They are actually rejecting God.

Again, the Lord Jesus mentioned the Holy Spirit and said that the Holy Spirit would testify about him. Christians also, working with the Holy Spirit, gave their testimony of Jesus. We share Jesus with people in a lot of different ways, through actions, attitudes, and words.

The main thing I want to remember from these verses is that suffering is part of being a Christian. Suffering and persecution is a normal part of the Christian life. Jesus suffered; we will suffer. Be prepared, be ready. Don't be surprised. Don't be offended. God is in control.

Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day. All who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

The Holy Spirit – John Chapter 16

16:1-6

Jesus told his disciples what would take place so that when those things happened they would not be offended. This is a reason why it is important to be truthful with new Christians. They should know what to expect. They should know that the world will hate them and they will suffer for their faith in Jesus Christ. When persecution comes, and it will come, then they won't be offended. Jesus was plainly telling them that they would suffer. Notice who will make Christians suffer? It is religious people who will persecute Christians. This means there will be people who have some form of religion or philosophy who will cause Christians to suffer. This is the record of history from the beginning. What Jesus said would happen did happen. Read Foxes' Book of Martyrs for history on this.

Jesus told his disciples that he was going away. This pointed to his ascension back to the Father after his resurrection. When Jesus told them he was going away they were sad. However, as we see through this chapter, it was necessary for Jesus to return to the Father so that the Holy Spirit would come. The Holy Spirit was with them at that time in Jesus, but after Jesus ascended the Holy Spirit came and lived in the disciples. This is called the baptism of the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist baptized men in water but the Lord Jesus baptizes us in the Holy Spirit.

Remember Jesus promised his disciples they would be put out of the synagogue. This meant they would be outside the normal framework of the governmental, business, religious, and social system of their day. The synagogue represented more than just a religious gathering place but was a center for the social, cultural, and economic as well. To be put out of the synagogue was to be put out of society. This was more than humiliation but caused a lot of practical difficulty for people.

Are we willing to bear the reproach of Christ? Are we willing to trust in the Lord Jesus when it impacts us financially? Jesus said to count the cost. There is a cost to being a disciple of Jesus Christ. However, this price is nothing compared to the price Jesus paid for us at Calvary. Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day. He purchased us with his own blood. We belong to him now. Repent of all self worship and make Jesus Christ your Lord and Savior today.

16:7-14

Jesus told his disciples ahead of time that he was going away. What he meant by this was that after his resurrection he would ascend back to his Father in heaven. Once he ascended to the Father he would send the Holy Spirit. The Comforter mentioned in this verse was another word used to describe the Holy Spirit. Jesus also called the Holy Spirit the Spirit of truth and Comforter. Jesus said after his departure he would send the Holy Spirit to his disciples.

Jesus gave us a glimpse into the purpose and work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit reprobates the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. He convicts the world of sin because they do not

believe in Jesus. He convicts the world of righteousness because Jesus goes to the Father and he can no longer be seen. He convicts the world of judgment because the prince of this world was then judged. The prince of the world mentioned here was Satan, also known as Lucifer, the prince of the power of the air, or the devil.

I think it is interesting that the first work of the Holy Spirit mentioned was convicting people of sin. I wonder how often we work with the Holy Spirit in evangelism in this manner. From what I've seen people tend to focus more on an intellectual approach to prove the truth about creationism versus evolution, or some other atheistic framed argument.

Instead, if we work with the Holy Spirit, we should go after the conscience. How do we do this? We do it like Jesus did it. Jesus flatly told people they were sinners and needed to repent. If they did not repent of their sins they would perish.

How do you convince people they are sinners? You show them from the Bible where their actions are wrong, their words are wrong, their attitudes are wrong, and their presuppositions about morality are messed up. Show them in the Bible that God created male and female. Show them that marriage is based on male and female. Show them scriptures where God values the life of children, and scripture which shows us that God knows us even before we are born. Show people from the Bible how coarse language or joking was spoken against. Show people how immorality is wrong from the Bible. Show them where the apostle Paul teaches us not to steal, or lie, or dishonor our parents. If a man can be shown that he is a sinner then he will realize that he needs a Savior.

I think the entire argument about proving God's existence is beside the point in most situations. It is a smoke screen people hide behind to create a relative moral worldview. Instead of dealing with these issues we should go for the conscience and demonstrate that people are sinners. Show them from the Bible that the wages of sin is death. Show them that Jesus Christ is the only way they can receive forgiveness of their sins.

The Holy Spirit works with us when we share God's word with people. Simply sharing God's word is enough many times. The Holy Spirit takes the word of God and applies it to people's heart and mind. Once a man hears God's word they will not be able to escape from it. God's word is not bound. It will accomplish God's purpose when it goes forth. Preach the word!

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would guide us into all truth. We can rely upon the Holy Spirit to show us the truth in every situation. If we take the time to pray and wait on the Lord he will show us the truth. We have a promise from the Lord that the Holy Spirit will lead and guide us into all truth. We don't have to live in confusion or darkness. We can pray and seek the Lord and he will speak to us. He will teach us from his word. He speaks to us. The Lord will teach us and help us understand. But are we willing to seek the Lord? Are we willing to have faith and not doubt when we ask God for wisdom? We must have faith and not doubt. Believe and we will receive from the Lord. It is God's promise to give us wisdom and understanding if we pray and wait on him.

Paul prayed that the churches would receive the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. We can also pray this and ask the Lord to give us his spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

16:15-24

Jesus described the Father and himself in order to help us understand that they are one God. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God. They are in perfect unity. One God. Three Persons. God is three in one.

Jesus continued to tell his disciples that he returned to his Father. He would no longer live as a humble man on earth but would be the resurrected God Man. The disciples had a hard time following what Jesus said. They could not read the New Testament like we can in order to understand that Jesus would rise from the dead and ascend to heaven. However, Jesus told them all of this on more than one occasion. I think it is interesting how God speaks to us and shows us things and we can't understand it because we are used to thinking in a certain way. It takes faith to understand what the Lord says. They had not yet experienced what Jesus said so the only way they could grasp it would be by faith.

The same is true today. God's word describes the second coming of Jesus. It is clear in the bible that Jesus Christ will return to this earth. The rapture of the church is clear. The kingdom of God on this earth is clear in the Bible. But for us to understand what the Bible says we must grab hold of it by faith. It is only by faith that we can understand God and what he says. Human logic is not enough. We must reach out by faith and grab hold upon the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Jesus told them they would mourn during the events which would shortly unfold. Jesus would be betrayed, arrested, condemned, crucified, die, and be buried. This would cause a heartbreak that we probably cannot comprehend. For us to understand the anguish of these men when they saw these events would mean we would have to believe what they believed before it happened. What did they believe? They believed Jesus Christ was the King of Israel and the Messiah. Can you imagine what it would feel like following a man whom you knew was the Messiah and the King of the world? And then to see him betrayed, condemned, and killed in the worst possible way imaginable? We can't even come close to understanding the anguish and heartbreak these disciples endured.

But their tears would only last for a while. Because after the resurrection they experienced a joy which is beyond comparison. Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Can you imagine what it was like to be one of his disciples in that room where he appeared and said "Peace be unto you." My heart fills with joy just trying to imagine what that must have been like.

I really like the promise which the Lord gave us here. Ask and ye shall receive that your joy may be full. The Lord wants our joy to be full. He desires for our heart to be filled with joy and peace. It is his will for us to have joy in our hearts. The Lord Jesus is the greatest joy we can ever know. He is the Lord God Almighty. To be in his presence is to know joy that is unsurpassed. Joy unspeakable and full of glory.

16:25-33

Jesus taught his disciples and us that we would face tribulation in the world. As Christians we face opposition. We are resisted and opposed by the spirit of this present world system and by those who walk in agreement with it. The more we grow in the Lord the more the world will recognize us as foreign and reject us. Look how quickly the world turned on the Lord Jesus when he revealed himself.

When we walk in the Spirit people who are in the flesh will know we are different. This is on a level where people may not even be conscious of the difference but will feel hostile towards the Christian for no apparent reason. I've actually seen this in action before. Sometimes people will be hostile and won't even know why they are being hostile toward you.

Jesus gave us a word of encouragement. He said to be of good cheer. It is OK if people give us problems because it teaches us patience, and humility, and unconditional love. As a Christian we learn how to love our enemies. If we want to walk with the Lord we will learn. Or we can choose not to learn and live like the world. But we will never be one of them. Once we are born again they will never accept us as one of their own. We are ruined for this world when we are filled with the Holy Spirit. We might as well just go all the way with the Lord and stop pretending we are like everybody else. We're not. We are heading to heaven, and they are heading to the pit. Don't pretend we are like them. It is easy to do that because we want to fit in. But we don't fit in. We have the Holy Spirit living in us, and the presence of the Holy Spirit in us will make people not like us. The Holy Spirit in us convicts them of their sins. Why should they like us? Our attitude, way of life, mannerisms, our lack of curse words or lack of joining in with coarse joking all works together to make them hate us. They hate us because our presence exposes them. It shines a light on them.

But be of good cheer. Jesus overcame the world. Because he overcame the world we also in him have overcome the world. This world system passes away. It is temporary. We are heading towards a new world that is eternal and will last forever.

Remember, forgive them, love them pray for them, bless them. Reject bitterness. Let the Holy Spirit fill us up and love people.

The Lord's Prayer – John Chapter 17

17:1-3

When Jesus prayed to his Father he lifted up his eyes to heaven. Why is this detail included? It is significant. God is in heaven. We are on earth. When we pray we are approaching the Lord who lives in heaven above. God sits upon his throne. We approach the Lord with reverence and sincerity.

Jesus knew exactly where he was at on God's schedule. He was in perfect union with the plan which God set before him. He knew it was time for him to go to the cross, to die for our sins, and to be raised again from the dead on the third day. His prayer was that his Father would glorify the Son. How would God the Father glorify the Son? The Father glorified the Son by raising him from the dead on the third day.

Jesus has power over all flesh to give eternal life to as many as God gave him. Here we witness a mystery which men cannot explain with systems of theology. This mystery of God's foreknowledge of those who would choose to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus said God gave those men to him. God chose them. But isn't it man's choice to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior? Yes. This is a mystery. It is a mistake to try to place this mystery inside of a man-made system of theology. Just accept the fact that man has a free will and can choose to believe in Jesus or not. And God chooses

those who will believe in Jesus. Both are true in a way that we cannot comprehend on this side of eternity.

Jesus told us what eternal life is. He described eternal life as knowing God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. Eternal life, then, is not something abstract. It is knowing God in a personal relationship. Man can commune with God. God communes with men because of what Jesus did at Calvary. The chasm which separated man from God was bridged by the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Now we can draw near to God in full assurance of faith. We can find rest for our souls through the forgiveness provided by the atoning work of Jesus Christ. We find new purpose in living by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The God shaped void in the soul of man is only filled when we return to God by faith in Jesus Christ. It is then we are filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit fills the emptiness in man. Man tried to fill this void with different things which the world offered. But nothing satisfied this longing in the heart of man. Only the Holy Spirit can fill this hole in the heart of men. Only the Lord Jesus can truly satisfy our thirst and hunger.

Eternal life is knowing God through his Son Jesus Christ. Decide today that you will forsake all other religions, philosophies, or psychology. Forsake every program and every self-help system you find. Turn to Jesus with all your heart and allow him to be the one and only Lord and Savior of your life. You will not be disappointed. Eternal life is yours by faith in Jesus Christ.

17:4-8

Jesus completed the work his Father gave him to do. What was this work? It was the finished and completed work of Christ. It was the work of salvation for man. It was the work of atonement. It was the work of being the lamb of God. It was the work of substitution. He took our place on the cross. We deserved to die because we sinned and fell short of the glory of God. But Jesus took our punishment upon himself so that he would suffer in our place. Now, if we believe and receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior we can escape the justified wrath of God against our sins. Sin demands a payment. That payment is death. Jesus died in our place so that we would not have to. In order to benefit from what Jesus did for us we must believe the gospel and receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

What is this gospel? Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 to see a basic outline of the gospel. It is this message of Jesus Christ which saves men from sin, from self, from this world, from Satan, from death, and from hell.

What did Jesus mean when he talked about the Father glorifying him? At minimum we know he meant his resurrection. God the Father raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Jesus prayed for his heavenly Father to raise him from the dead once he gave his life upon the cross at Calvary.

Jesus said that he manifested God's name to the men who followed him. There is a lot to be said about this. One thought which comes to my mind is that we have two paths of life to chose from. One path is to live according to one's own name. This means you exalt yourself, promote yourself, and live for self. This is the foundation of the world system. It is the root and branch of the entire world system we see around us.

There is another way to live, though. It is to live by the name of the Lord. When we take the name of the Lord then we let go of our own name. We no longer promote our own name. Our mission is no longer to make a name for our self. Our mission is now to make the name of Jesus Christ great and glorious.

When we take the name of Christ then we deny self, take up the cross, follow him. These are spiritual laws. You cannot worship self and worship God at the same time. You cannot live by your own name and the name of Jesus at the same time. People try, but eventually every man gets thrown off that tottering fence. You cannot live for self and Jesus at the same time. You cannot be a Christian and exalt your own name.

What did John the Baptist say? I must decrease. He must increase. There is no way around this. It is a fixed spiritual reality.

Not only did Jesus manifest God's name to his disciples but he also gave them God's word. This is a pattern we see in the lives of the prophets in the Old Testament. They lived by God's name, and they received God's word. They no longer were their own. They belonged to God. As a result they received and proclaimed God's word.

God's word gives us life. It is alive. The word of the Lord is spirit and life. It gives life to others. This life lasts forever. God's word never diminishes, or fails, or fades away. It endures forever, just like God's name endures forever, just like God endures forever. He is eternal life. To be connected to him is to have eternal life.

Once they knew God's name and received God's word then they knew who Jesus was. They knew he was from God. How did they know this? They found out for themselves by believing in God's name and God's word that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Jesus is exactly who he says he is. God is three in one. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come. Hallelujah.

17:9-16

Jesus prayed for his people. Jesus prayed for his disciples. He prayed for those who heard his word and believed what he said to them. Jesus said those who heard his word and believed in him were given to him by God the Father.

We can't really understand how this works this side of eternity. We must accept this mystery by faith.

What does it mean that Jesus was glorified in us? How was the Lord Jesus glorified when we believe in him? It brings glory to God when we believe his word. It brings glory and honor to the Lord when we hear, and receive, and believe the word which he gave us. Faith honors God. Faith honors the Lord. Do you want to glorify God? Do you want to honor the Lord? Then believe his word. Believe his promises. Hold fast to his word and his promises. Don't let his word go. Hold onto his word.

Jesus said he was no longer in the world. He only had a few hours left with his disciples. He went to Calvary, and to the grave, and was resurrected on the third day. Life would no longer be the same. He would no longer be walking the dusty trail with them, but now would be with them forever in the Spirit. He would not only walk with them, but the Holy Spirit would live in their hearts.

Jesus said while he was with his disciples he kept them in the name of his Father. Their provision, and protection, and portion all came because they lived by the name of the Father. Now Jesus went to heaven and he prayed for them that the Father would provide for them, and protect them, and be their portion.

None of the Lord's disciples were lost except the son of perdition. It was necessary for the scripture to be fulfilled, and as a result, there was always one of those twelve disciples who was a traitor in their midst. There had to be one traitor in order for the scripture to be fulfilled.

This is another mystery that we must hold by faith. We cannot understand from our limited human perspective why it was necessary for Judas. It was. It had to be. There was no other way. Jesus had to die on the cross for us. This was the only way men could be saved from their sins.

Jesus said these things in front of his disciples so that their joy would be full. This is a joy which went beyond temporary happiness. It was an abiding satisfaction with God, with God's word, with God's plan, with God's purpose. It was a deep, abiding knowledge of the permanence of God and his love for us.

Notice Jesus did not hide the fact that people would hate Christians. Because Christians hear God's word which Jesus gave to us, and we receive God's word, and believe God's word, then the world hates us. Why?

The world hates faith. It hates what it cannot see. The world hates God. Why? Because the world wants to be in control. The world wants to live by its own man-made rules. It does not want to submit to God, and indeed, it cannot.

Those who hear and receive and believe God's word are no longer part of the world system any longer. The world hates any man who believes in Jesus. This hatred is demonstrated in a million different ways. Sometimes those who are in the world do not even realize they hate Christians. Their interpretation of their emotions is always in the context of self-worship. So, hatred will not be seen as vile. It will not be seen as negative. Hatred in their mind feels more like a sense of superiority. They really think they are smarter than the Christian. They feel smarter, stronger, more informed. They think they are wise! Isn't this what the serpent promised Eve? Wisdom? Yes, this is the lie they believe. They think they are wise. But God says they are fools. (Psalm 14:1)

Jesus said he was leaving the world. We are not of this world, but we are left here as his ambassadors. We represent the Lord Jesus Christ to the world. We are witnesses. We are lights. We are salt. God leaves us here to act as a preservative and help others come to the knowledge of the truth. Jesus did not pray for us to be taken out of the world system of government, business, and society. He prayed we would be protected and delivered from the evil in this world. He prayed the Father would protect us from the evil spirit which energizes the world system. This evil spirit consists of the pride of life, the

lust of the eyes, and the lust of the flesh. Jesus prayed for us to be delivered and protected from this evil while we serve him within this world system. We are on the mission field.

How do we escape the corruption of the world while living in this system? Don't allow your heart to love the same thing the world loves.

First of all, remember, the world loves SELF over everything. Every person who succeeds in the world system has learned to worship self. Self is their portion. The entrance for many into the world system is the perceived need for provision. And then it moves on to protection. But it ends with worshiping of self. This is the pride of life. This corruption is progressive. It does not stand still.

The Christian does not stand still either. We are to grow in grace. We add to our faith virtue, and knowledge, and temperance, and patience, and kindness, and love. Our goal is not self. Our goal is Jesus Christ. We obey the Holy Spirit. We do not obey the lust of our flesh, the lust of our eyes, or the pride of life. Our purpose in this world is to represent Jesus Christ. Our purpose is to be salt and light. Our purpose is not self-provision, self-protection, or self-worship. We do not live like the world does. Instead, we seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and then God gives us provision, and protection, and he is our portion forever.

Today is the day of salvation. It is time to let go of your life, and accept Jesus Christ as your life. His life lasts forever. Let go of this world, and embrace the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. Turn away from Satan (self-worship), and turn to God. Turn from darkness, and turn to the light of Jesus Christ. Call upon the name of Jesus. He is here. He is speaking. Can you hear him?

17:17-23

God's word is truth. We are sanctified by the truth, the word of God. This reminds me of the scripture "washing by the water of the word". Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. He said they were clean already, but washed their feet. What did this mean? Everyday we need to be washed, even though we are clean through the finished and completed work of Christ. We are secure in our salvation. We have eternal life. But while we live in this world we need a daily cleansing in the word. The sin in this world, the sin in our flesh, corrupts, corrodes, and if left to itself will cause us to follow further and further away. We need the daily cleansing to follow up close. We need to walk in step with the Holy Spirit. This work is done by the word. How do you apply this? If you are not reading your bible you are not being cleansed daily. God's word contains spiritual life which will cleanse away the death in the world. It gives us life each day. It is like the manna Israel collected daily. We must touch the Lord through his word daily.

As God sent Jesus into this world he sent his disciples into the world. How did God send Jesus into the world? Jesus came into the world in the most humble way possible. In a stable. Laid in a manger. Growing up in a poor family, in a poor neighborhood, in a poor village. How did Jesus live? What was his purpose? How does the Lord want us to live in this world?

1 Corinthians 7:30-31, "*And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.*"

How do we live in this world? Recognize it is passing away. Do not hold on to your life or possessions here. This is all temporary and transient and passing away. Don't live for this world.

How did God send Jesus into the world? He sent Jesus into this world to die on the cross for our sins. What is our purpose then? Certainly it is not to live for self. Our focus and goal should not be self. Our goal is God's glory by living by faith and obeying the Holy Spirit. We are ambassadors for Christ. We are salt in this earth, we are light in this world. We lay down our lives so that others can receive the message of life, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Jesus not only prayed for those disciples with him at that moment, but also everyone who would believe in him because of their message. They shared the gospel, preaching throughout the known world at that time. Jesus prayed for those who would be saved as a result of their ministry. This meant what Jesus prayed in this verse was for us today who believe the gospel passed down to us after thousands of years. Jesus prayed for us. He still prays for us. He lives forever making intercession. He is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God by him for he lives forever making intercession for us. There is no other mediator between God and men but the man Christ Jesus.

Jesus prayed for his disciples and those who would believe, and he saw that the world would know about him as a result of this. The world today knows about Jesus because there were always people who believed in him and in God's word. People know about Jesus today because people proclaimed the gospel. This work continues to this day.

Have you believed? Have you received? Today is the day of salvation. Now is the time to humble yourself and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. He will return soon. We will give an account of our lives to him. The only hope you have when you stand before God is whether or not Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior. Call upon the name of the Lord today. Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

17:24-26

In these final verses of the Lord's prayer we see that the Lord Jesus prayed that his people could be with him. The Lord wanted all his people to be with him. The Lord desires to return and get his people. He will return and we will be with him where he is. He told his disciples in John 14 that he would return and that we would be with him where he is.

Have you ever thought about Jesus wanting us to be with him. I know I want to be with the Lord. But do we ever stop and realize the Lord wants us to be with him where he is? One day we will be. There is an appointed time. A day will come when God the Father will speak and it will be the day of the Lord's return to his people. We will be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And we will be with the Lord forever.

We no longer live by our own name, but we live in the name of the Lord Jesus. We go forward from this point calling upon the name of the Lord. He is our life. He is our provider, he is our protector, and he is our portion forever.

Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose from the dead on the third day. Call upon the name of the Lord. Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord Jesus will be saved.

Spiritual Warfare – John Chapter 18

18:1-9

Jesus had a routine his disciples knew including Judas. The betrayer knew where Jesus was and used this to betray him. Keep in mind Jesus knew that Judas was aware of his routine. Jesus knew where Judas would bring the soldiers. The Lord was in control the entire time. Jesus asked them who they were after they fell to the ground. This is a description of a supernatural event where Jesus spoke and men fell down. The Lord made sure none of his disciples were arrested. He was a true shepherd. When the wolves came he protected his sheep. When Jesus protected his disciples it fulfilled Bible prophecy.

The Lord is always in control even if it does not appear on the surface that he is in control. God knows everything. Judas thought Jesus walked into his trap, but in reality, Judas walked into the Lord's plan. You cannot outwit the Lord. The enemy thinks he is smart enough to outwit God. God will always have the last laugh. God sets aside the evil man for the day of evil. Everything works together to bring glory to God and benefit those who are on the Lord's side. If we do not understand these evil times it is because we have not seen the end of the Lord. Think about Job. Consider the end of the Lord. Consider what men mean for evil God means for good. Romans 8:28. All things work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose.

John described the power of the Lord's word. John remembered how the Lord protected his disciples. John remembered bible prophecy was fulfilled through what the Lord Jesus did.

Sometimes problems in life may seem insurmountable. However, as we see in this passage, all we need is for the Lord to speak. All we need is for God to speak into our life and everything can change. This is why I continue to have hope and faith every day. I wake up and my heart hopes in the Lord. I know nothing is too difficult for the Lord. Nothing is impossible for God.

18:10-18

Peter did not understand what the Lord Jesus was doing. He struck with his sword. Peter's actions remind me how many times I've tried to fight the Lord's battles in my strength. I don't always understand what the Lord is doing in a particular situation. However, I should remember Ephesians 6. Our battle is not against flesh and blood. Our battle is not against people but against the powers of darkness. Jesus fought the long war against Satan, but Peter fought one small skirmish which didn't amount to anything. The name of the man Peter attacked was recorded. Malchus. Is he mentioned by name because he later became a Christian? Remember Peter withstood the Lord before when Jesus said he would die on a cross. Jesus said to Peter "get thee behind me Satan". Again, Peter was against the purpose of the Lord. Jesus told him to put up his sword. Incredibly, Peter was not arrested for cutting off Malchus' ear. This was evidence of the power of the Lord to protect his disciples during this.

The Lord Jesus was taken to the religious leaders. Peter and John followed the crowd who arrested Jesus. John went in because he was known somehow in the circle of the religious leaders. John spoke to someone to let Peter in. Peter was confronted by someone with the charge that he was a disciple of Jesus. I don't think Peter denied Jesus because he was afraid. I think Peter's denial came as a result of confusion. In this state of confusion, he denied the Lord. He did not know what Jesus was doing. As long as he thought Jesus had his back he was willing to fight the Roman army. But now he was alone. Confused. He denied that he knew the Lord.

Peter stood there with them warming himself. I often compare this scene to the scripture in Psalm 1 which mentions standing with sinners. Judas stood with those who arrested Jesus. Peter now stood with them and warmed himself at their fire. For Judas this was a deadly failure. For Peter it would be a lesson he would never forget for the rest of his life.

18:19-24

This interrogation from the religious leaders reminds me of how the religious leaders questioned the blind man Jesus healed. This interview had nothing to do with men who wanted to find out the truth about a situation.

Instead, this was all about trapping Jesus in his words and condemning him. The Lord knew what this was about. He allowed himself to be brought into this situation.

All of a sudden someone struck Jesus for his reply during the interview. The man who struck Jesus seemed out of order and Jesus brought attention to how the man was out of order in striking him.

Is Jesus protesting this treatment? I don't think he was protesting, because he already knew what would happen to him. I think the Lord was drawing attention to this for some other reason.

Why? It showed the depravity of man. It demonstrated the reality that men are only pretending to be civilized. When men have an opportunity they release the evil in their hearts. People look for opportunities, any opportunity, to sin and justify their sin. When evil is socially acceptable it will open the floodgate of evil in the hearts of men.

Jesus did nothing wrong. This man who struck Jesus was out of place and out of order, even though shortly Jesus would be brutally beaten and tortured and crucified.

This man was getting a jump on what was happening. Somehow this man already knew Jesus was open prey. How did he know this? Everyone knew the religious leaders were only pretending to interview Jesus. This was no true trial. There was no justice being sought in those proceedings. It was a gang bent on lynching Jesus. The spirit of murder was coursing through the veins of those people. They could smell blood in the water.

These events remind me of the account of when the apostle Paul was struck while he was judged by the religious leaders. Imagine if you were in a courtroom today and the bailiff felt like he could just haul off and sucker punch someone on trial. How would that make you feel? What if it was your family

member, who was falsely accused, and was on trial, and all of a sudden an officer in the court decided to give your family member a bloody nose for no reason? How would you feel?

This was wrong on so many levels. But what I want to draw attention to is the spiritual dimension in this account. This man who struck Jesus manifested the power of the devil that controlled these people.

Do you think devils control people today? You hear a lot today about cabals, secret agendas, and conspiracy theories. In my opinion, I think men know very little of what they are actually involved in. They have no idea most of the time why they do what they do. They are being used by the devil.

Ephesians 2:1-3, "*And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you used to walk when you conformed to the ways of this world and of the ruler of the power of the air; the spirit who is now at work in the sons of disobedience. All of us also lived among them at one time, fulfilling the cravings of our flesh and indulging its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature children of wrath.*"

This scripture teaches us that powers of the devil work through men who live according to the flesh. I've seen professing Christians who lived according to the flesh be used by the devil to speak his words. It is possible for a professing believer to have his mouth taken over by the devil. Remember how Jesus rebuked Peter and said to him, "*Get thee behind me Satan*".

The anger toward Jesus in this mock trial went beyond human anger or cruelty. There was a snake in the grass. There was a serpent injecting spiritual poison into these people.

May God help us to remember this. Ephesians 6:12, "*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this world's darkness, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*"

The Lord's fight that day was not with these people. Jesus came into this world to die upon the cross so that these people could be saved. The real battle raging was a spiritual battle between the Lord and the forces of darkness. The Lord completely defeated the devil through his death, burial, and resurrection. He spoiled the principalities and powers of darkness and stripped them of all their authority and power. (Colossians 2:15)

Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord Jesus will be saved.

18:25-27

Peter was in a state of confusion and he stood too close to the enemy's fire. Sooner or later the world will challenge you if you belong to Jesus or not. The people challenged Peter whether or not he was a disciple of Jesus.

At that moment I believe that Peter was genuinely confused. He did not understand what was happening with Jesus. He was ready to fight in the garden, but now he didn't know what to do. Maybe he thought he would pretend like he was with everyone else until he could figure out what was happening.

But the world won't give you time to figure things out. You have to be ready to give your answer when they come knocking. Peter failed this time. Later, however, he would be restored by the Lord Jesus and would go on to preach the gospel boldly.

At that moment, however, the powers of darkness filled the atmosphere around these events. Peter denied that he knew the Lord.

The Lord Jesus told Peter he would do this. In other gospels we read that when Peter remembered the word of the Lord he went out and wept bitterly. Even this denial of being a disciple of Jesus was known by the Lord ahead of time.

I'm glad the Lord knows everything about us and yet still loves us. He still went to the cross and died for us to save us, and redeem us, and purchase our salvation. He gives to us eternal life, not because we have been perfect or got our life together, but because he loves us. Jesus loves us and gave his life upon Calvary for our redemption.

All we have to do is hear, receive, and believe God's word. Change your mind about what you've been thinking all your life, and instead, believe the good news that Jesus Christ is Lord of all. Everyone who believes that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead and confesses with their mouth that Jesus is Lord is saved. Call upon the name of the Lord.

Christian, be ready to give an answer for the Lord. Do not be ashamed of the gospel. Instead, be ready to participate in the afflictions of the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit.

18:28-40

It stands out to me that these religious leaders were concerned about ceremonial cleanliness when their hearts were filled with murder. This showed the insanity of dead religion and man-made systems of religion. Remember Jesus said that true Christians would be killed by those who convinced themselves they did God a favor. We see this through all history. The largest man-made religions are responsible for the most bloodshed.

Notice they would not answer Pilate's questions directly. Pilate asked them what was the charge and their reply was that they would not have brought Jesus to him if he was not guilty. You see here the duplicity of those who operate in darkness and are empowered by the devil. You cannot confront people like this with truth because they will evade the truth always. No matter what you say to them they will turn your words upside down and inside out. This is an example of spiritual warfare.

Pilate told them to take him and judge him according to their own law. Pilate rightly did not want to have anything to do with this. The reply of the religious leaders showed their purpose and goal. They wanted to kill Jesus. They were determined to use Pilate to kill Jesus.

When Pilate interviewed him the Lord Jesus stated that his kingdom was not of this world. The world system that is in place right now on this planet is totally opposite of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. One aspect that separates this current world system from God's Kingdom is the fact that this

current world system is built on the names of men. God's kingdom is not built on the names of men. It is built upon one name only, and that name is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is King of kings, and he is Lord of lords. The devil offered the kingdoms of this world to Jesus but the Lord refused. He would not accept things as they are. He will remake all things after the pattern which is in heaven. This world will not be based on the names of men but it will be built upon the foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other name. (Acts 4:12)

Pilate could find no fault in the Lord Jesus. He tried to release him, but instead the religious leaders and the people demanded the man Barabbas be released instead. This is a good metaphor for us. Jesus took the place of Barabbas. Jesus took our place. He who knew no sin became sin for us. He is our substitute. What did Barabbas feel that day? Was he thankful? Did he appreciate the fact that Jesus took his place? Do you?

Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day. Call upon the name of the Lord today and be saved.

Death and Burial of Jesus – John Chapter 19

19:1-15

Why did Pilate have Jesus flogged? He tried to placate the religious leaders. He thought if he punished Jesus that would be enough for them. He underestimated their determination to kill Jesus. They were not content with Jesus being flogged and mocked. They wanted him dead. This determination to murder Jesus was unexpected for Pilate. He did not know the powers of hell he was up against that day.

While Pilate tried to get the situation off his plate the religious leaders told Pilate that Jesus said he was the Son of God. The religious leaders wanted Jesus to die because he said he was the Son of God. This made Pilate more afraid. He was in way over his head.

Pilate talked to Jesus again. Jesus did not provide him with any information to set him free. He came to give his life as a ransom for us. He came to die upon the cross for our sins.

Pilate tried to convince the religious leaders to let Jesus go. Instead, the religious leaders invoked Caesar. One thing which scared a man in government was invoking the name of someone superior to himself. Pilate could not get around this. The religious leaders intentionally invoked the name of Caesar. As a result, Pilate could not get out of the situation. If he released Jesus the religious leaders could complain that he was a traitor to Caesar. If he surrendered Jesus to be crucified he would sin against his own conscience and what he knew was right and wrong. Eventually, he had no choice. This was why Jesus said to him that those who handed him over to Pilate had the greater sin.

When the religious leaders said they had no king but Caesar they repudiated not only Jesus but Jehovah God. They drove out God as their king and replaced him with Caesar. This happens again in the last days when Israel will be deceived by the Antichrist. Another man, the man of sin, will come in his own name. This man of sin will be accepted by Israel. Only when he desecrates the temple will they realize they accepted the wrong man.

This is what happens when anyone rejects Jesus. There is no such thing as a spiritual vacuum. If we reject Jesus we embrace the devil. There is no in-between. God is infinitely greater than the devil but God will not violate the free will of men. If men reject God then by default they follow the same path as Satan and go to the lake of fire.

Why will you die in your sins? It is not God's will for anyone to perish in their sins. Turn from your unbelief today and accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. He is your one and only hope of escaping eternal darkness and damnation. Call upon his name. Jesus Christ is Lord!

19:16-27

Pilate handed Jesus over to be crucified. The soldiers led him away to Golgotha where he was crucified between two criminals. Pilate had a sign attached to his cross that read "Jesus of Nazareth. King of the Jews." Why did he do this? Perhaps this was his way of getting back at the religious leaders? But it was a very appropriate sign for Jesus. He is and will always be the King of the Jews. He is the King over every nation. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. The religious leaders wanted Pilate to change the way the sign was written so that it implied Jesus claimed to be the King of the Jews. But Pilate did not budge. He wrote that Jesus is the King of the Jews.

While Jesus died on the cross the soldiers cast lots for his clothing. This fulfilled specific bible prophecies which said that men would cast lots for his clothing. Even the smallest details of the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ fulfilled what the prophets said would happen. How did God prove to men that he is God? He tells us what will happen before it happens so that when it happens we will believe. This is the purpose of bible prophecy. It is meant to build our faith and give us assurance of our faith in Jesus. A lot of the prophecies we see in this passage were originally written down for us in Psalm chapter 22. Jesus even quoted this chapter while he was on the cross. Read all the gospel accounts to give a full picture of what happened that day when Jesus was crucified. See also Matthew 27:32-44; Mark 15:21-32; and Luke 23:26-43.

While Jesus hung on the cross he made final arrangements so that his mother would be taken care of. He assigned his disciple John to take care of Mary, his mother. Jesus always thought about others. Even as he died on the cross he thought of others. His love endures forever. God's love never fails.

God loves you. How much does God love you? He died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins and mine. He gave himself upon the cross to rescue us from a devil's hell. Will you believe the gospel today? Will you repent of your sin and turn to God and put your faith in Jesus Christ? Your eternal destiny weighs in the balance. Today is the day of salvation.

19:28-37

Jesus focused on the importance of scripture being fulfilled correctly. When the Lord knew everything was accomplished according to scripture he said he was thirsty. There was a jar of sour wine nearby. They soaked a sponge and lifted it up to him. After he received it he said, "It is finished." When Jesus said this he yielded up his spirit. Jesus completed everything which God the Father gave him to do. He completed the work of salvation. He completed the work of redemption. This is called the finished and

completed work of Jesus Christ. Because of what Jesus did for us we can have assurance of salvation. We can rest in the Lord with confidence that our sins are forgiven, we are justified before God, and that we now will live forever with God. We receive eternal life through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and his finished, completed work upon the cross of Calvary.

Because of the approaching holiday the religious people did not want bodies hanging on crosses. To expedite the death of those crucified they broke their legs so they would die faster. However, when they came to Jesus he was already dead so they did not break his legs. Instead, they pierced his side with a spear. This was proof he was dead. It was also another fulfillment of Bible prophecy. The scriptures fulfilled were verses which read that his bones would not be broken and they would look upon the one they pierced. John was a witness and he saw all of this. He tells us a truthful, accurate report of the events which took place that day.

This entire section focused a lot upon fulfillment of Bible prophecy. Jesus put a lot of emphasis on Bible prophecy with his disciples. The disciples included many quotes from the Old Testament in their record of the account of the life of Jesus, his ministry, and his death and resurrection.

Shouldn't we also be concerned today about Bible prophecy in our own day and time? There are many Bible prophecies which describe events leading up to the second return of Jesus Christ to this earth. Many of those bible prophecies could be interpreted as being fulfilled in our own day and time. Jesus taught us that when we see these things beginning to come to pass then to lift up our heads because our redemption is drawing near. Now is the time to be saved. Now is the time to look for the return of Jesus Christ. Our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.

19:38-42

These closing verses for John chapter 19 mention the two men who buried the Lord Jesus. Both of these men were religious leaders and also disciples of the Lord Jesus. One was Joseph of Arimathea and the other Nicodemus. John chapter 3 records the conversation the Lord Jesus had with Nicodemus.

The burial of Jesus fulfilled Bible prophecy. Isaiah 53:9, "*He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in His death, although He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth.*" This prophecy points to how Jesus was crucified with criminals and was buried by these two rich men in their tomb.

Everything in the life, ministry, crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus was foretold in Bible prophecy. The Lord told what would happen before it happened so that when it happened we would believe.

These two men took care of the Lord's body. They wrapped it in linen cloth along with the spices and buried him according to Jewish tradition.

God the Father placed us into Christ Jesus. Paul later taught us in the book of Romans that when Christ was buried we were buried with him. (Romans 6:4) This is what water baptism represents. We are buried with Christ through water baptism. When we come back up out of the water we are resurrected

with him. Our old life of sin is now buried in a tomb. We are dead to that old life. We have been raised together with Christ to live a new life in the power of the Holy Spirit.

God does this work for us. When I was a young Christian I used to wonder how I could bury myself with Christ. I couldn't work it out in my mind. I tried to approach these spiritual truths with my rational, logical mind but I could not work it out. Finally, one day I realized I don't have to figure this out. This is a work which God did for me. I simply accept by faith that God placed me into Christ. When the Lord Jesus was buried I was buried in him. It is no longer I who live, but now it is Christ who lives in me. I accept the truth by faith. I trust in the Holy Spirit to apply the power of this truth to my everyday life situations.

What did these men feel when they buried the Lord? What did they think? I'm sure they were heart broken. They probably were confused why all this happened to the Lord Jesus. Yet, they were moved with love for the Lord to make sure he had a proper burial.

Resurrection – John Chapter 20

20:1-9

Early on the first day of the week. This would be early on Sunday morning. While it was still dark. This shows us how early it was. Why are we given details like this? Details like time and place show us that the events recorded are rooted in historical places and times. Remember this was not a made-up story. This happened.

Mary Magdalene went to the tomb where Jesus was buried by Joseph and Nicodemus. What did she expect to find? Why was she there? We're not given a reason why she was there, only what she found when she got there. She found the stone was removed and that the body of the Lord Jesus Christ was gone. She immediately went to report this to Peter and John. She said they took the body of Jesus out of the tomb and "we" do not know where they have put him. The "we" was probably the other women who were mentioned at the tomb that morning as well. Peter and John went to investigate at the tomb. They both ran to the tomb. They found the Lord was gone, but his grave clothes were still there. John saw this and believed that Jesus was risen from the dead. They did not understand at that moment the scriptures foretold that Jesus would rise from the dead.

It is interesting that Mary Magdalene had such a prominent place in this record of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I do not understand all this implies but it shows us that her love for the Lord enabled her to do what others could not. Her love kept her at his tomb and she continued to seek him even after everyone else gave up and went home. Love endures. Love never fails.

Is this what the Lord wants from us? I think Mary was underlined here because of the great love she had for Jesus. Is this the same Mary that Jesus cast devils out of? Is this the same Mary that anointed Jesus with expensive ointment? There are a few different women named Mary in the gospels, but I like to think this is the same one. She loved the Lord Jesus. She was forgiven much, and she loved much.

Also, I remember there was a Mary who anointed Jesus in preparation for his burial. Is this the same Mary? Jesus said her story would always be told in conjunction with the proclamation of the gospel. If this is that same Mary then indeed she was placed right in the middle of the gospel narrative. She was there as a first witness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Jesus died on a cross, he was buried in a tomb, and on the third day, a Sunday morning, he rose from the dead. We know he rose from the dead because of the testimony of Mary Magdalene. We know from the testimony of Peter and John. These were real people. They were real men and real women who loved the Lord, who lived with him, and were witnesses of his resurrection. It is upon their testimony of the resurrection of Jesus Christ that we stake our entire salvation. Their testimony is true. We can trust in their account of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Christ died for our sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day. He died in our place. He rose from the dead. By this he demonstrated he has power over death and the grave. He lives forever. Death no longer has any hold upon him. We who believe in him and the testimony in scripture will live forever with him.

20:10-18

The disciples went home but Mary continued outside the tomb. She was crying and she looked into the tomb. She saw two angels sitting where the body of Jesus had lain. They asked her why she was crying. Mary, obviously beside herself, said she didn't know where the body of Jesus was at.

At this point the Lord Jesus arrived. Perhaps Mary broke his heart and he had to let her know he was alive. She did not recognize it was Jesus at first. Jesus asked her why she was crying. He asked her who she looked for. Mary thought he was the gardener and told him if he took the Lord's body she wanted it back.

Then Jesus revealed himself to her when he said her name: "Mary". Immediately she knew who he was. Jesus told her not to cling to him but instead deliver a message to the disciples. Jesus called his disciples "my brothers". That seems very significant to me. Jesus called us his brother. That makes my heart yearn to be with the Lord. Mary did as the Lord told her. She went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and she told them what he had said to her.

These verses teach us that our love for the Lord can touch him. The Lord is moved with compassion by the feeling of our emotions and our love for him. I believe one reason why the Lord appeared to Mary like this was because of her emotion and love. The Lord is touched by the feeling of our infirmities. He is moved by compassion for us. This shows us the tender heart of God our Father. The Lord is good to all, and has compassion on all that he has made.

The Lord appeared to people but they didn't always recognize him. Why did God hide himself like this? Why did the Lord show up in our lives and we didn't even know it was the Lord? Many times I believe God intervened in my life and I did not realize until later that God helped me or had intervened. I can see now, looking back, some amazing things which happened in my life that I now know was completely the Lord. I did not recognize it at the time. Why did the Lord hide himself like this? I believe this shows us something about his character and humility. The Lord's humility is so foreign to

us. We can scarcely comprehend how delicate and thoughtful the Lord's humility is. I don't know why, but this gives me a great deal of comfort when I think about the humility of Jesus. We hardly ever come into contact with people who are so humble. When people do something good they always want other people to know about it.

How can I apply this to my life? I can remind myself not to make a name for myself. Don't put myself forward. Help others in a quiet, unassuming manner. Do not draw attention to myself.

Another lesson here was that love for Jesus could move his heart. When we love the Lord he responds. When I lift up my heart and worship the Lord he hears, he sees, and he responds to our love and worship. The Lord inhabits the praises of his people. Faith in God brings glory to God. Trust in the Lord and don't be afraid. No matter what circumstances look like the Lord is still here with us. He will never leave or forsake us.

20:19-23

Jesus appeared to individual people but here was the record of when he appeared to a group at one time. This was the same Sunday he rose from the dead. It was at the end of the day in the evening. The doors were shut and they were all locked into a room because of fear of the religious leaders. Jesus appeared in the midst of them and greeted them with peace. He proved it was himself by showing them his hands and his side. This was the proof that he was crucified, and died, but he was now alive again. From this we have proof that he did not resurrect in a spirit or ghost form. He had a physical body which they could see and touch but it was different. His body was a resurrected body. He could appear and disappear even though his body was solid as well.

Jesus pronounced peace upon them again and then charged them with their mission. He told them that even as the Father sent him that he would also send them out. He breathed on them and told them to receive the Holy Ghost.

He told them the sins they forgave were forgiven. If they retained anyone's sins they were retained. My take on this is simple. When we share the gospel we give people a way to receive forgiveness. However, if we don't share the gospel we prevent people from hearing the message which provides forgiveness of sins. Our authority as believers is in the gospel of Jesus Christ. There are Christian cults who teach that men have power in themselves to pronounce God's forgiveness on someone almost like a magical word. This is what the Catholics do with their priest system. I think that is an aberration of what Jesus taught here.

All believers have the opportunity to share the good news of the gospel. When we share the gospel we give people an opportunity to be saved and have their sins forgiven. However, when we fail to share the good news then we stop people from receiving forgiveness of sins. This is a responsibility which we have as Christians. Our calling is to promote the gospel and tell people that Christ died for their sins, he was buried, and he rose again on the third day. Through faith in the gospel men can receive forgiveness of sins.

20:24-29

The Lord spoke with one disciple by the name of Thomas. It is encouraging to me to see that the Lord took time to minister to one of his disciples who was stubborn. Thomas said he would not believe the testimony of the other disciples unless he could put his finger into the nail prints and his hand into the Lord's side.

When the Lord appeared to the disciples again Thomas was with them and Jesus challenged Thomas to do what he said. Put your finger in the nail prints and your hand into his side.

When Thomas met the Lord he declared that Jesus is Lord and God. The Lord gently rebuked Thomas. He said Thomas believed because he saw Jesus but blessed were those who did not see and yet believed. This would include us today. We have not seen and yet we believe the testimony of the Lord Jesus.

This passage taught us that God was willing to condescend to help people who struggled with their faith. The Old Testament account of Gideon was another good example of how God helped people overcome doubts and fears. Many times the Lord allowed Gideon to use various tests in order to confirm and strengthen his faith in the Lord.

For some people faith comes easily. When John saw the grave clothes of Jesus in the tomb he believed the Lord was risen. He had not seen the Lord yet but believed.

For others it required the Lord to take personal time with them in order for them to believe like Thomas.

It brings glory to God when we believe in him by faith. This reminds me of the scripture Romans 4:20, "*He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God*".

The greatest thing you can do today is believe the gospel. Believe the testimony of the men who saw Jesus, spoke with him, lived with him, and were witnesses of his resurrection. Trust in God's word today. When you believe it brings glory to God.

20:30-31

John provided us with the purpose of this book. In this book he included examples of the miracles which Jesus did but he did not write everything. Not everything about the Lord was written in this book. We see variations of the same account in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. I think even with these four gospels there was still many things which the disciples experienced with the Lord Jesus which was not written down. Later John would tell us that the world could not contain the books which could be written about all that Jesus did in his life. The purpose of this book was to provide us with enough information that we can believe and receive eternal life by faith in Jesus.

Thinking about this last statement I realize this could be applied to the Bible as a whole. Why did God give us a book? It is so we could know enough about him in order to believe and receive eternal life. God chose to transmit the testimony of who he is through a book. God speaks. His words are recorded

in a book. How else would he get his message to us? Why do people have a hard time believing that God would speak to us through a book?

The Lord speaks. He never says anything which contradicts what he said in the Bible. But he does speak. If you will seek the Lord you can find him. You can hear his voice. Jesus said his sheep hear his voice.

Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus is God who came into this world as a man. He is fully God. He is fully man. He is the God Man. If anyone denies that Jesus Christ is God he does not know him. If anyone denies that Jesus Christ is a man he does not know him. Jesus is fully man. Jesus is fully God. He died on the cross for our sins, he was buried in a tomb, and he rose again on the third day. We have an account in this book of the events of his life, ministry, and sacrifice. God has done everything to provide us with forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life. All he asked from us was to believe the testimony he provided. Believe and receive him today. Jesus is Lord.

Restoration – John Chapter 21

21:1-14

The disciples returned to their fishing profession, for whatever reason. They were not yet completely focused on the mission the Lord gave them. He appeared yet again in a way which made it difficult for someone to identify him. However, they knew it was the Lord. They didn't ask him if he was the Lord. Why would they have to ask if he was the Lord? Obviously, something about him changed, which it made it difficult to identify him, but they knew who he was.

Once again, as it happened when Jesus first called them to be his disciples he blessed them with a large catch of fish. They brought the fish to shore and counted the number of fish they caught. They caught 153 fish.

Jesus made them breakfast and instructed them to bring the fish they caught to add to the meal. This was the third time Jesus showed himself to his disciples after he was risen from the dead.

These details like "third time" always stand out to me. Why were the fish counted? I'm sure there are spiritual meanings to these details but I don't know what they are.

We can see clearly how much the Lord Jesus cared for these men. They did not have a heart for the ministry Jesus called them to so the Lord still served them. He reminded them again through this miracle of catching these fish that he was their provider. We don't have to live for ourselves. We can work but never be deceived into believing that your purpose in life is a paycheck. The Lord gives us purpose and meaning and not our work. Jesus is our provider. He is the one who gives us health, and food, and money to live on. He provides us with what we need. God is our provider, and our protector, and our portion forever.

One personal application to take away from this account was how easy it was to return to what was familiar to them. It was easy to continue to live according to what was familiar to them. However,

when the Lord calls them they could no longer live in any way which they chose. The Lord called them for a purpose, and he had a plan for their life. (Jeremiah 29:11). God has a calling on our life. He has a work and a ministry for us. We are exhorted to grab hold upon that for which the Lord grabbed hold upon us for.

Remember Matthew 6:33, *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."*

Jesus proved he can provide for us. He can multiple fish and bread. He can create food, clothing, transportation, medical supplies, and any other thing we might need. The Lord is able to give us what we need. Let us surrender our life to him, trust in him, and focus on obeying his calling upon our lives.

21:15-19

After eating a meal the Lord Jesus had a conversation with Simon Peter. He asked Peter three times if he loved him. Why three times? In my opinion the Lord here asked him three times because Peter denied the Lord three times. Most people I've heard preach on this say the same thing, but it doesn't mean we actually know the reason the Lord asked Peter three times, *"Do you love me?"* Peter affirmed that he did love the Lord. The Lord Jesus then told Peter to feed his sheep. Peter was called by the Lord to minister to the church. He was called to feed the Lord's sheep. Peter referred back to this in his letter. 1 Peter 5:2, *"Feed the flock of God which is among you..."*

What does this tell us about the character of God? He wants to forgive us, restore us, and reconcile us back to himself. Even when we fail the Lord we can return to him and we can humble ourselves, confess our sins, and ask the Lord to wash us clean. He promised that he would forgive us if we would confess our sins. (1 John 1:9)

Not only did the Lord Jesus restore Peter and put him back into the ministry, but he also told Peter that he would grow old and showed him the way he would die. Jesus signified what death Peter would glorify God. From church history we know Peter died as a martyr for the Lord Jesus Christ. They crucified Peter upside down on a cross.

We can see in the book of Acts and also by reading Peter's letters that he obeyed the Lord. He went on to be a leader in the early church, and no matter how hard people tried to capture him or kill him he survived for a long time, until he was an old man.

One detail which caught my attention was the phrase: *"signifying by what death he should glorify God."* I wonder how often we give any thought to glorifying God in our death. This is something I have prayed about a few times in my life. Lord, let my living and my dying bring glory to your name. Amen. My hope is that the end of my life will bring honor and glory to God. He who began a good work in me will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. (Philippians 1:6)

21:20-25

In these final verses Peter asked the Lord about the apostle John. Notice how careful John was when writing this not to mention his own name, but he still wanted to make it clear who he was. Why did he

avoid stating his own name so carefully? If you will take the time to study the word "name" in the Bible it is eye opening. Just by studying that word I came to understand one of the fundamental differences between the world system and the kingdom of God. The world system is built on the names of men. The name of man represents pride. The name of the Lord is the kingdom of God, and it is a kingdom where no man except Jesus Christ is exalted. No man there will be great except the one who humbled himself and served others with whatever gift God gave to him.

Jesus corrected Peter. Basically he asked Peter why it mattered to him what happened to John. Peter himself should focus on following the Lord. Isn't this a familiar human characteristic? We focus on how others serve God, but fail to pay attention to our own walk with the Lord. If we would focus more on our personal obedience and less on what others do we would be better off.

It is interesting here the amount of detail given in these final verses about how Peter and John would die. John said that Jesus did not say he would never die. Jesus only said that John would tarry until Jesus came again. This was what happened. John was an old man when the Lord Jesus came to him again and gave him the vision contained in the book of Revelation. Even as an old man, God still had a great work left for John to do. Never think you are too old to be of service to God. We can never be too old to serve God.

Psalm 48:14, "*For this God is our God forever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.*"

John completed his book by saying that there were a lot more things which Jesus did. However, if everything Jesus did was written down then even the world could not contain the books that should be written. I think that was a great way to complete this book.

There were a lot of books written about Jesus. Let me add these comments to the pile of what others have said before me. May this bible commentary be a blessing and encouragement to all who take the time to read it. Amen.

Mike Kines
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